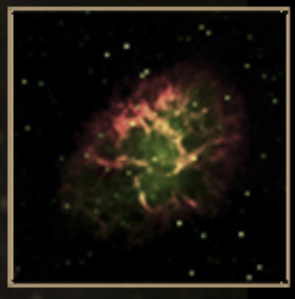
# PBASE

## Magazine

October
2006

Featured PBase Photographer

## Adam-Stuart



and much, much more inside

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PBASE.com MAGAZINE

LOOK AND THINK BEFORE OPENING THE SHUTTER. THE HEART AND MIND ARE THE TRUE LENS OF THE CAMERA.
~ *YOUSUF KARSH*

# Editorial Notes

COVER PHOTO BY ADAM STUART
DESIGN BY GARY BLANCHETTE

## FROM : The Editor's Desk

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As a child, I had always been fascinated by Carl Sagan's TV show, *'Cosmos'*. His energetic and lucid commentary would often mesmerize me, as I watched the stars and galaxies unfold before me, completely in awe of how large the Universe really is, and how small Earth is, and how microscopic, we, inside Earth really are. Quite a co-incidence, then, that we found *Adam Stuart*, for this issue – his passion for astrophotography was just the kind of 'different style' we were looking for.

Infact, this time, we wanted to feature a photog of PBase who was *not easy to find.* Traditionally, what we do is we browse the PBase popular galleries and pick one photog from that list. It is just easier for us to do. However, that means that till date most of the PBase photogs we have featured are those with over a million votes, and are in the public eye. They are, of course, all fabulous photographers, but what about the thousands of equally talented photographers, who aren't that popular ?

We turned to the public, asking them for help here. The request was simple "*Tell us who you think is a great photographer, tell us why, and please don't give us names with a large number of hits (i.e. popular photogs)".* A lot of people responded, and we picked Adam Stuart, with his passion for astrophotography as the featured photographer of the month for this issue.

In the pro-photography section, we feature Rahul Dutta, a very young but extremely talented fashion photographer, who talks about the cut-throat fashion industry and shares advice on how to keep on top of this extremely competitive and high-ego market segment.

After a short break in the past couple of issues, we re-introduce the *Gear Talk* section, where Andy Williams shares his thoughts on the *Huey Pantone,* a new generation of budget monitor calibration tools that makes hardware based calibration a reality for the non professional. Infact, I was so taken in by the simplicity of the Huey, that I bought one for myself, and added to Andy's review as well. Let's just say that if you have never calibrated your monitor, this is the time to see the difference it makes.

Equally exciting (we hope!) in this issue, we feature an article on Travel, where Ray talks about his experience in a small town in South Africa, and in Photoshopography, Steve takes us through his vision of artistic retouching.

In addition, we feature a small article on '*Women in Digital Photography'* – an effort by a group of women who have gotten together to promote the work and galleries of women who are intested in (digital) photography.

In our Culture Cauldron section, Paul takes us through a unique ride of The Netherlands - the place, the people and their culture. Personally, I find The Netherlands to be one of the most beautiful places in the world and was glad to have Paul step forward with this article. We also have Tom giving us a micro view of the macro photography world in the learning section.

I had alluded to an upcoming printing service in the previous issue, and was hoping it would be operational by this issue. Unfortunately, the quality of the print was not upto our expectations, and the owners of the priniting service never got back to us after we reported the problems, so we are looking around for other options.

Finally, thank you for all your donations and merchandise purchase. We are still quite far from our goal of world domination, but in the meantime, have bought ourselves some nice t-shirts on your donations. Yes, we are a completely self-centered and money centric bunch of people. Enjoy !

~ Arjun Roychowdhury
www.pbase.com/arjunrc

# PBASE PHOTOG: Adam Stuart

Adam collects photons, traveling at 186,000 miles per second, on a special detector plate. His charge-coupled device (CCD) camera is cooled and connected to a computer-driven telescope. All of his equipment is permanently housed in a fiberglass observatory, which can be remotely operated from his home office. For obvious reasons, dark skies are his canvas. During the day, he is a pediatrician in private practice, having attended Hobart and William Smith Colleges and the University Of Miami School Of Medicine. He has two beautiful daughters, Lauren and Rachel. He has had a life-long interest in science and astronomy, and purchased his first digital camera 5 years ago after dabbling in 35mm photography with Nikkormat and Yashica cameras.

**PBase Magazine:** Your profile on Amazon says *"Adam Stuart is a medical doctor, and of course an experienced amateur astronomer"*. Which one is your profession and which is your obsession ?

**Adam:** I spent 4 years in college and 7 additional years training to become a medical doctor. Intensive academic preparation allows one to have a profession. Too bad that the term "obsession", in medicine, is associated with an often disturbed and often unreasonable idea or feeling about something. I think about the night sky and taking extended images all the time, so I am guilty as charged: astronomy and astrophotography are definitely an obsession for me!

*Great Horsehead and Flame Nebulae in Orion*

**PBM:** When and how did you first get interested in Astro-photography ? Would you describe your interest as something that gradually settled in, or did you just happen to see Spock's Vulcan salute as a child and decided that was the thing for you ?

In the late 1960s I was given my first department store toy telescope which many people are familiar with: a metal, black and white tube (a simple refractor) that comes with excessive advertising on the box promising unparalleled views of the universe, ability to see the United States flag planted on the lunar surface, and so forth.

*Gibbous Moon*

When you are a kid, magnification is the end-all, but the impractical and false promise of 500 x or 600 x magnification is silly. Most experts will agree that 30- 50 x per inch of aperture is pushing it. When I was older, I happened to shuffle through the pages of a beautiful color telescope catalog which contained pictures of the planets and objects beyond our solar system, all obtained with a special camera that did not even have a viewfinder to look through!

Five short years ago, I started putting a laundry list together of the hardware and software necessary which would allow me to take images of the universe. I was hooked from day one, jumping into this wonderful hobby with both feet. I read all the popular magazines, ordered many catalogs, called distributors across the United States comparing prices for the major pieces of equipment, and had more than a degree of sticker shock when I realized how expensive taking pictures in the dark would be.

Spock's Vulcan salute in The Wrath of Khan, I am a bit embarrassed to say, left a mark on me when I was a kid because I can recite the famous 1982 movie line by heart: *"Were I to invoke logic, however, logic clearly dictates that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few"*.

**PROFILE**

NAME: ADAM STUART, M.D.

WEBSITE: HTTP://WWW.PBASE.COM/ADAMSTUART

FROM: MIAMI, FLORIDA, USA

YEARS AS PHOTOGRAPHER: 10+

PHOTOGRAPHY STYLE: ASTRO PHOTOGRAPHER

EQUIPMENT: STARLIGHT XPRESS™ HX916 CCD CAMERA, OLYMPUS C-2100 ULTRA ZOOM

## THE STARGAZER:

*"I think about the night sky and taking extended images all the time, so I am guilty as charged: astronomy and astrophotography are definitely an obsession for me!"*

*Mare crisium, a large mason (gravitational anomaly) on the Moon*

*"Spock's Vulcan salute in The Wrath of Khan, I am a bit embarrassed to say, left a mark on me when I was a kid because I can recite the famous 1982 movie line by heart: 'Were I to invoke logic, however, logic clearly dictates that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few'."*

*Great Andromeda Galaxy, M31*

**PBM:** Congratulations on having your book published by Springer-Verlag. In the introduction, you write *"Not all amateur astronomers who live in a suburban location realize just how very effective a 'chilled-chip' astronomical CCD-camera and software can be at cutting through seemingly impenetrable light-pollution…"*. What is a chilled-chip astronomical CCD-camera – does one convert (mod) an existing camera or is it a speciality camera ?

Thank you for your kind words. Showcasing my images on PBase.com was actually responsible for motivating me to write a book (CCD Astrophotography: High-Quality Imaging from the Suburbs).

*Rosette Nebula, NGC 2237*

I originally wanted to bind all of my displayed images on my PBase Website, much like a coffee-table book, but then decided to fill a niche by writing a CCD imaging book for beginners, by a beginner, documenting what can be captured under challenging skies. Miami, Florida (USA) has terrible imaging conditions for much of the year due to the inherent skyglow.

A chilled CCD camera levels the playing field when light pollution, sky glow, warm environmental temperatures, high humidity, and long integration times are taken into account. The CCD chip records objects too faint for the eye to see. Light from distant objects, after teeming across space and time, is recorded on the detector as electronic signals at each pixel element site. A computer that the camera is connected to subsequently counts the electrons and processes the data as an image of light and dark regions. Greater sensitivity over film emulsion due to the cooling of the CCD chip allows less noise and better quality data to be acquired for later processing. A typical imaging session requires acquiring multiple images of the same object being imaged. The telescope is tracking the intended target at sub-pixel accuracy, and post-acquisition software stacks the images, with various methods to choose from, because the signal-to-noise ratio needs to be optimized. For example, 60 1-min exposures averaged are equivalent to a 1-min total exposure in terms of actual signal, while noise is reduced by the *square root of n.*

The take-home message for why chilled astronomical CCD cameras are necessary is that noise, the unwanted, random variations in brightness and color that is always present within any signal, needs to be minimized because ideally we want image data to exceed image noise.

**PBM:** What are the challenges, as you see it, to astro photography by an amateur with a personal budget?

I think it is wonderful that the Internet provides numerous, readily accessible forums for interested newcomers to astrophotography to ask questions and view images before having to plunk down any money.

The inherent challenge immediately facing a newcomer to this type of photography is deciding what method is going to be employed when acquiring astrophotos. A simple 35 mm camera on a tripod, a cable release keeping the shutter open as the Earth rotates and the night sky "moves" east to west, produces pleasing star trails. Employ a clock drive to counteract the

*Author posing in front of Technical Innovations 6' Home Dome*

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rotation of the Earth, to which your equipment and you are firmly attached, and now you can attempt astroimages that have pinpoint stars. Replace a telescope's eyepiece with a camera and now your telescope glass becomes a monstrous 2,500 mm f/10 or f/6.3 camera lens. Attaching a piggybacked camera body to a telescope which has a clock drive now allows one to take wide-field vistas that likewise show pinpoint stars and, depending on how dark your skies are, possibly extended targets such as galaxies and nebulae.

*Saturn*

There is quite a variety of equipment to select from: cameras can be 35 mm traditional film, consumer-grade or astronomical digital megapixel cameras, or specialized cooled CCD chip astronomical cameras costing upwards of $15,000.00 U.S. Telescopes can be purchased whose cost can rival that of an automobile or even a small house. Take note of a budget and take hold of your wallet. One huge challenge is being realistic about a budget and being realistic about how involved one is going to be in the hobby. Know your local weather patterns, know how dark your typical skies are if considering a permanent set-up, because both will dictate how often you will be imaging outside.

For me, a portable set-up was appealing for a few weeks as I learned the mechanics of my computer controlled telescope, but I quickly tired of dragging hundreds of pounds of equipment outside when imaging sessions were cut short due to cloud cover or rain. I wanted a white fiberglass observatory that could permanently house my equipment and could be opened for an imaging session and closed because of inclement weather in a short period of time. I decided to splurge on everything, and even connected the observatory to my home office via a 150 foot Ethernet cable run.

Many successful amateur astrophotographers, however, have modest equipment portable enough to throw in the car and portable enough for the astrophotographer to drive to a dark imaging site. The overwhelming good news is that there is available equipment for every budget, and numerous available imaging set-ups depending on one's goals. Do your homework before spending a dime.

**PBM:** How has the onset of digital cameras changed your field of photography ? What was it like before the digital era and how is it now ?

I was given a very heavy Nikkormat 35 mm camera and a fairly light Yashica 35 mm camera almost 25 years ago. When I first purchased my 10" aperture computerized telescope, which can be thought of as a 2,500 mm f/10 lens when attaching the camera body in place of the telescope eyepiece (prime focus), I was quickly dismayed to see the results of my film efforts: there is intrinsic camera shake when the shutter is released, and the purchase of a cable release did not help matters. All of my planetary and lunar images were blurry or out of focus. Very bright objects, such as the Moon or planets, require integration times measured in fractions of a second to at most a few seconds. Unfortunately, extended, distant targets such as nebulae and galaxies require many minutes to collect enough photons to register on the CCD chip.

Astrophotography with film cameras suffers from reciprocity failure (less sensitivity to light with longer integrations). Imaging set-ups that involve film require special cooling systems (a special telescope-mounted device that holds the back of the film against a chamber of dry ice), or baking the film in hydrogen and/or nitrogen gas (gas hypersensitization), all in an attempt to reduce reciprocity failure and introduce only a moderate amount of fog. I was not interested in this type of astrophotography for technical reasons. Now, digital cameras that can be cooled (astronomical versus consumer-grade) blow the 35 mm enthusiasts away in my opinion, but my hat is off to the pioneers who developed the film techniques and showed all of us newcomers how the Big Boys used to do it.

*Moon crater Clavius, made famous in Arthur C. Clarke's "2001: A Space Odyssey"*

**PBM:** Digital Noise, banding and several other interference issues keep coming up for digital cameras at both ends of the price spectrum. How much of this actually affects your work, since I imagine, a lot of the images are of long-exposure?

Long exposures, higher ISO settings, and even higher temperatures can introduce noise into your digital photographs. Noise is typically visible in very dark or black areas evidenced by colored pixel artifacts. You can choose a lower ISO

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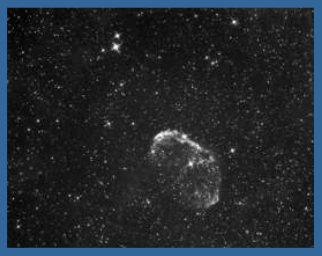


*Crescent Nebula (NGC 6888), H-alpha*

*"Long exposures, higher ISO settings, and even higher temperatures can introduce noise into your digital photographs. Noise is typically visible in very dark or black areas evidenced by colored pixel artifacts. You can choose a lower ISO setting. Increasing the ISO on your digital camera is like turning up the volume on your radio. Fixed pattern noise seems more prevalent than banding or random noise"*

setting. Increasing the ISO on your digital camera is like turning up the volume on your radio. Fixed pattern noise seems more prevalent than banding or random noise. Taking dark frame exposures (same integration time as a light frame, but with the lens cap on) and subtracting this image from the light frame can also reduce noise. Inside my observatory, I have to be careful about unshielded electrical components being plugged into nearby surge protectors in the vicinity of my CCD camera, and USB 1.x (12-Mbps transfer rates) shows more interference and banding issues than USB 2.0 (480 Mbps) on my images that are downloaded from the camera.

*Jupiter, Great Red Spot transitting and satellite Io approaching planet's limb*

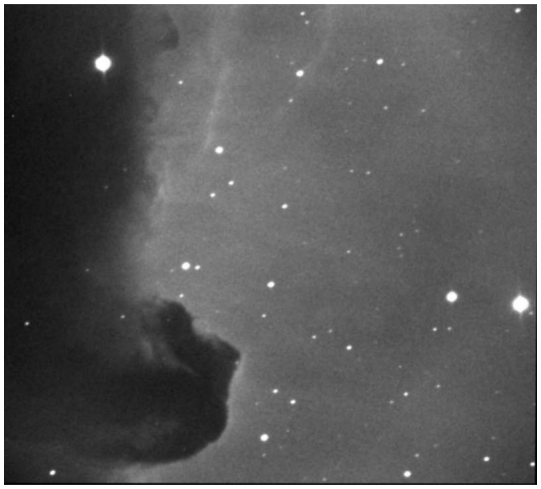
**PBM:** What would you say are the minimum requirements in terms of equipment to start with for an astro-photographer enthusiast? Going ahead, what would you say is the 'dream wish list' of equipment ?

A cooled chip CCD camera, a telescope with which to image through or mount the camera on top of, a portable computer and planetarium software with which to navigate the night sky, directing the telescope to any celestial coordinates, and decent astronomical processing software I would consider minimal requirements for an enthusiast.

*Flame Nebula (NGC 2024) in H-alpha*

Getting back to the rotating Earth, a fact of life that we must deal with, a telescope that is not polar aligned (i.e., a telescope that does not sit on a special mounting plate which allows the polar axis and declination axis to compensate for the rotation beneath the equipment) will not allow extended integrations to be made. The polar axis of the mount parallels the Earth's axis of rotation, which greatly simplifies the tracking of celestial objects across the sky. For long-exposure deep sky photography, polar alignment is critical. So, right off the bat, a camera and telescope mounted on a simple tripod will dictate the type of astrophotography targets that can be imaged due to the time constraint before obvious field rotation sets in. Once polar aligning (equatorial mounting) becomes a possibility, a clock drive that allows camera and telescope to move at sidereal rate (apparent motion relative to "fixed stars") opens up a plethora of available targets to image.

A dream list of equipment is, for obvious reasons, very expensive. I suppose a quality Ritchey-Chretien optical system, professional grade, large chip CCD camera, Software Bisque Paramount ME telescope mount, and a permanent fiberglass observatory large enough to house all of the equipment and provide enough walk-around room for creature comforts would be an idealized set-up. With necessary accessories, filters, and so forth, this dream list will approach $100,000.00. I have a little bit of all worlds at an affordable scale for me. My observatory is fully automated but only 6 feet in diameter: this necessitates other people interested in what I am seeing or imaging sitting in my house, 150 feet away, and watching on a networked computer screen via RealVNC software. Such are the compromises when one does not have a money tree in their backyard.



*Horsehead Nebula (B33) in H-alpha*

**PBM:** Would you say that the current state of digital cameras are sufficient for this type of photography ? If not, what would you say are the improvements that you hope for ?

A few years ago, after purchasing my consumer-grade 2.1 mega pixel Olympus C-2100 UZ camera, I joined the Digital Astrophotography Yahoo! User Group and could not duplicate any of the gorgeous images that I saw posted on the Websites of many imagers. Bright objects requiring only a fraction of a second integration

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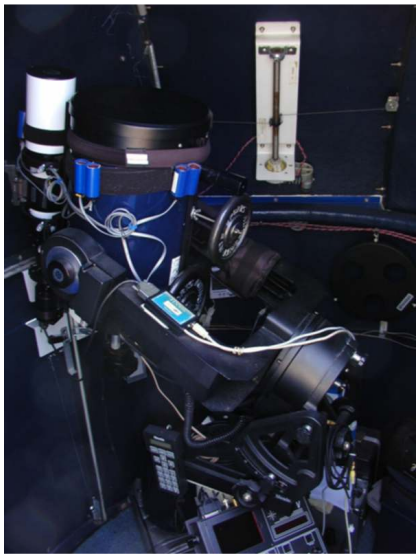
were achievable with my set-up, but I learned that I needed to spend a lot more money on a professional grade digital camera that allowed for shutter speeds extending into tens of seconds to more than a few minutes.

Digital cameras that do not suffer from noise (unwanted, random variations in brightness and color) are largely a result of more efficient cooling of their CCD chip. A consumer-grade digital camera uses a charge coupled device or CCD to record images. When you pay $80.00 for an entry level point-and-shoot digital camera, it would be unreasonable to expect included features to allow for extended imaging, removable lenses (like an SLR 35 mm camera) in order to attach the camera body to the telescope, and so forth. An astronomical CCD camera uses similar technology but adds cooling to the CCD to reduce noise. Without the cooling, all long exposure photographs taken with digital cameras will contain unacceptable noise. Hoped-for improvements would be larger-sized chips in digital cameras with removable lenses for attachment to a telescope, at an affordable price. Entry level professional grade digital cameras that compete with monochrome, dedicated astronomical CCD cameras cost thousands of dollars and deliver, for the most part, inferior images.

**PBM:** Would you please describe your current equipment and environment setup that you use ?

My main astronomical camera is my Starlight Xpress™ HX916 camera, the world's first megapixel monochrome CCD camera that comes with a fast USB connection. Unbinned images are 1300 x 1030 pixels and take 11 seconds to download. Matching a CCD camera to a telescope is important in order to optimize the resolution that your optics can deliver. One has to consider field of view seen by the CCD chip and image scale expressed in arc-sec/pixel).



*Meade 10" LX200, piggybacked Stellarvue Nighthawk refractor, and SBIG STV camera screen at bottom of image. Dome shutter windlass (white) shown at back of observatory.*

My imaging platform is my fully computerized Meade 10" LX200 f/10 classic, with a computerized data base of over 64,000 celestial objects. I have a piggybacked mounted Stellarvue® Nighthawk f/6 achromat refractor for wide-field imaging. I use a Gateway Pentium 5 computer in the 6' Technical Innovations Home Dome, which is a fully automated fiberglass observatory that rotates and has a fully operational dome shutter. The observatory is carpeted, and creature comforts include a television, VCR and CD/radio.

*Technical Innovations 6' Home Dome, shutter partially opened*

I ran Cat 5e Ethernet cable to my home in shielded PVC conduit and use RealVNC software to control the telescope and camera from inside my home office. Software Bisque's TheSky software allows a virtual sky to be shown at all times during my imaging session on my computer screen, and an artificial display of real-time cross-hairs on the computer screen shows exactly where the telescope is pointing.

The telescope and camera are guided by an SBIG STV camera, which allows autoguiding the system on a selected star, monitoring and adjusting the LX200 mount during the imaging session by calculating exposure times for a selected star and estimating the amount of move to make. Precision calculations are based on fractions of a pixel. I also employ a Phillips ToUcam Pro PCVC740K camcorder for taking really close-up images of the Moon, Sun and planets. With a Barlow lens, the effective focal length of the imaging train exceeds 5,000 or 7,5000 mm!

*Meade 10" LX200 with blue dew shield, piggybacked Stellarvue refractor, and inside view of observatory*

*"My main astronomical camera is my Starlight Xpress™ HX916 camera, the world's first megapixel monochrome CCD camera that comes with a fast USB connection.*

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**PBM:** What software do you use for processing your images ?

I cut my teeth on MSB Software's Astroart 2.0 for software processing, which also happens to be my image acquisition/camera control software suite. There are many software utilities from which to choose, but more expensive software demands a higher level of understanding and skill which I currently lack. Astroart 2.0 (since upgraded to 3.0) permits whole-image manipulation only, as does a second software program that I use for certain parts of my image processing routine: Willmann-Bell's AIP4Win. I use a freeware utility, RegiStax, written by Cor Berrevoets, to process camcorder images since AVI files, at approximately 1 MB per second of recorded imaging, demand a memory intensive program that can work with thousands of images. Finally, I use Corel Photopaint 8.0 for selective image processing, since this program allows various filters to be utilized on certain portions of an image (i.e., selective sharpening or darkening of a portion of a nebulae region).

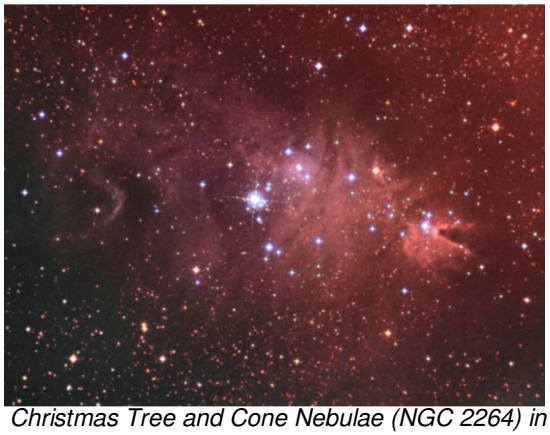
*Ring Nebula, Messier Object M57*

**PBM:** Of all the star-gazing that you do, which cluster, galaxy or nebula impressed you the most and why ?

Oakridge Observatory saw first light on September 1st, 2002. First light is a milestone which describes when one's equipment records light images for the first time. To this day, I remember selecting the Dumbell Nebula, M27, from my planetarium software program, commanding my telescope and attached camera to slew to the target within a few arc-second's accuracy (1 arc-second is 1/3,600 of a degree), and waiting 11 seconds for the image to download to my computer screen. From my light-polluted skies, I swapped an eyepiece for the camera, could see nothing, but on my computer screen was indeed a floating, majestic dumbbell nebula. Carl Sagan's *Cosmos* series music was playing in the background and the entire scene was surreal for me. It remains a very special moment.

**PBM:** Are there any specific events which are of special interest to astro-photographers ? Can you describe for us any special event for which you planned your shoot, how you researched it and how you executed your photography ?

There are so many great projects and different facets of this astrophotography hobby. Lunar eclipses can be recorded in all their glory (my first was recorded in May, 2003 and the sequence is on my Website and was also published on two International astronomical Websites). I used TheSky software to time-stamp an imaging session so I could estimate how long an entire eclipse would last at my specific location in the world, and was able to record representative images from beginning to end. Satellite transits across the face of giant planet Jupiter, as well as the Great Red Spot, are likewise fun to record.



*Christmas Tree and Cone Nebulae (NGC 2264) in Monoceros*

Many of my Website images of this event also record the shadows of the moons as they are projected on the atmosphere of this gas giant. Sunspot morphology changes can be recorded, as well as changing brightness levels over time of variable stars. In February, 2005 OakRidge Observatory was given an official observatory designation, assigned by the Minor Planet Center upon receipt of acceptable observations by me of minor bodies (asteroids). Astrometry, the precise measurement of the position and motion of astronomical objects, and photometry, the measurement of apparent magnitudes of astronomical objects, are additional special interest projects that many astrophotographers participate in.

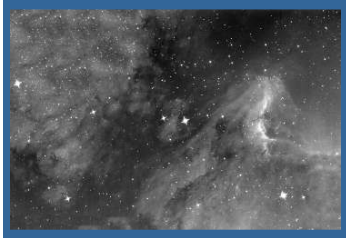
Many of us dream of discovering and recording an unknown comet or chunk of rock hurtling across our CCD chip.

**PBM:** Are there any amateur organizations that one could participate in, which promotes such a specialized field ?

The Internet is replete with specialized groups that one can join, rubbing elbows and exchanging ideas and images with very knowledgeable and talented imagers.

I am actively subscribed to many Yahoo! Groups. Rod Mollise moderates the SCT-User Group (sct-user@yahoogroups.com) which boasts almost 4,800 members as of this writing. SCT are the initials for the type of telescope that I own. Terry Platt moderates the 2,100 member Starlight Xpress Group , and there are additional groups for SBIG (the manufacturer of my guider at SBIGSTV@yahoogroups.com), MSB Astroart (AstroArt@yahoogroups.com), AIP4WIN (AIP4WIN@yahoogroups.com), the LX200 telescope (LX200@yahoogroups.com), the Minor Planet Mailing List (mpml@yahoogroups.com),

*Hercules Globular Star Cluster, M13*



*North American Nebula (NGC 7000) and Pelican Nebula (IC 5067-70), H-alpha. Composite image*

*Harvest Moon and Mars (upper right near palm frond)*

Observatories (Observatories@yahoogroups.com),and SoftBisqUser (the manufacturer of my planetarium software at SoftBisqUser@yahoogroups.com). There are local and regional astrophotography meetings, clubs, lecture circuits by renowned authorities, as well as star parties, astroimaging parties, and so forth. Although a specialized field and hobby, there are limitless resources available to allow a newcomer or obsessed enthusiast to remain in good company with very likeable and knowledgeable colleagues.

**PBM:** Finally, on a lighter side, are astro-photographers typically *trekkies* or *Warriors,* or, do they ususally dislike both Star Trek and Star Wars ? (I am a big trekkie, if you must know).

On a purely technical level, the Empire can squash the Federation's butt!

My imagination soars when I think about the phenomenal scale that my images deal with, in terms of both space and time. The space shuttle lifts off and travels a mere 200+ miles to the International Space Station.
Our closest celestial neighbor, the Moon, is a quick 3-day visit by rocket in order to travel the 250,000 miles.

When I image distant nebulae or stellar nurseries, light traveling at 186,000 miles per second has been traveling for millions or billions of years in order to find my detector positioned just right. The size of these objects is beyond comprehension. Star Trek and Star Wars depict space travel at warp speeds which is, at best, science fiction not supported by any physics in our known universe.

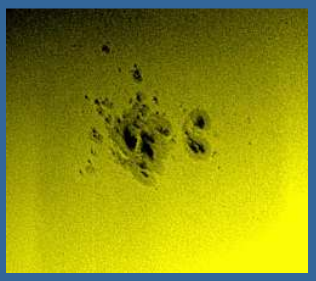
Actually, one of my heroes, Stephen Hawking, argues that since we don't yet have a complete unified theory, we can't quite rule out warp drive. Known as Clarke's Third Law, Arthur C. Clarke wrote in 1961, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic". The magic of Star Trek and Star Wars is good fun to be sure, but astroimagers who are grounded are not looking for little green men in their images or wondering if a Tribble or a Wookie are peering back at us.

*Nebulae Complex IC 1396, H-alpha*

Our thanks to Don Schulte, who recommended Adam's Galleries to us, in this thread . Don says *"Adam's astrophotography not only demands a highly technical knowledge of photography and astronomy, but combines the artistic vision of a fine art photographer. Proof is his many published pictures in magazines and books as well as his authored own book.*

*As a child growing up in the countryside of mid-Missouri I always searched our dark skies for this scattered grouping of stars. Everytime I saw it I knew there was a force much greater than humans working in this world. Adam captures its awe-inspiring beauty!"*

*"My imagination soars when I think about the phenomenal scale that my images deal with, in terms of both space and time. The space shuttle lifts off and travels a mere 200+ miles to the International Space Station"*



*Sunspot complex 484, October 2003, almost 87,000 miles (137,000 km) in diameter (almost 11 Earth-diameters)*

*Bubble Nebula (NGC 7635)*

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

# PRO-CORNER: Rahul Dutta

Rahul Dutta is a well known and respected portfolio and fashion photographer from India. Perfection is second nature to this 30-year old fervent photographer who has managed to rock the glamour industry with his simple yet exquisite photography. Rahul decided to pursue this profession six years ago, and since then there has been no looking back for him. He has managed to carve a niche for himself in the industry and works with known brands like *Bata*, *Monte Carlo*, *Hyundai* and *Nokia*, to name a few. Rahul shoots for top designers in the country and has also shot with film stars and TV personalities. Well known fashion pageant winners for 2006 *Grasim Mr.India*, *Ponds Miss India* & *Gladrags Megamodel* are Rahul's portfolios and discoveries. What keeps him going is the love and support he gets from his family and friends and with whom he spends whatever little free time he gets. More of his detailed work can be seen at www.rahuldutta.net

**PBase Magazine:** You hold a diploma in foreign hotel management and you are a stock broker by profession. Not only 'how' did you get into photography, but how did you become so good?

**Rahul Dutta:** I think photography is in my genes. My father, while serving in the army, used to practice photography in his spare time. The pictures were developed at home and I assisted him . This is how the passion started evolving.

*Indian*

Besides photography, as is true for most sons, I used to get impressed with *everything* that my father did. I joined him in the stock brokering business and helped him grow it to limits we never imagined. But somewhere deep inside, the love for photography never died.

It was only around 2002 that I decided to plunge into photography as a profession. Being new to this field, I did approach a couple of established photographers for help but considering my successful brokering background, I couldn't get much help from them (I guess they never thought a well to do stockbroker could really be interested in photography as well).

I decided to try out things for myself and started browsing the web and studied sites like www.fredmiranda.com, www.dpreview.com and www.pbase.com. I looked at the minutest possible details by the photographers in them and then tried them on my own. The next step was to send my work to the photographers at these sites. Surprisingly, they appreciated my work and this fuelled my passion even further. I guess with enough passion, a stockbroker could be an equally successful photographer (if not more!).

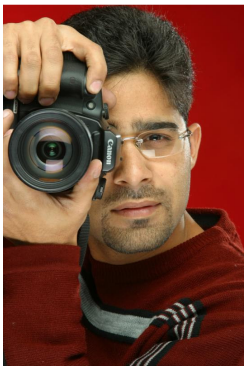
**PBM:** Can you briefly walk us through a photo shoot from when a company approaches you to when the photo is posted on a billboard?

The process is quite simple. The companies approach me and then it is followed by a formal face-to-face meeting to discuss the concept of the shoot. Whatever the brainstorming leads to is used as the basis for the shoot, in terms of theme and concept. I do both outdoor and indoor shoots (usually at my own studio). A normal shoot lasts for eight to nine hours. A lot then goes into post processing of the pictures. I usually do my shots using high resolution cameras like Sinar 22 megapixels digital back & Canon EOS 1Ds Mark II.

Special efforts in terms of planning as well as retouching are put in when the pictures are to be used to huge billboards. This is also where the Sinair digital back comes very handy.

**PBM:** How intensive does negotiation get in your business ? Do you find your clients usually hard-ball for discounts ?

Its' been six years now that I have been shooting in the fashion industry. The amount of negotiating is inversely proportional to your reputation, portfolio



**PROFILE**

NAME: RAHUL DUTTA

WEBSITE: WWW.RAHULDUTTA.NET

FROM: NEW DELHI, INDIA

PHOTOGRAPHY STYLE: FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

YEARS AS PHOTOGRAPHER: 6 YRS

EQUIPMENT: CANON EOS 1DS MARKII, SINAR 22 MP DIGITAL BACK ON MAMIYA RZ 67 PRO II, 1200 PROFOTO LIGHTS, ETC.

## FASHION TALK:

*"It was only around 2002 that I decided to plunge into photography as a profession. Being new to this field, I did approach a couple of established photographers for help but considering my successful brokering background, I couldn't get much help from them (I guess they never thought a well to do stockbroker could really be interested in photography as well)"*

*CK*

*"The companies approach me and then it is followed by a formal face-to-face meeting to discuss the concept of the shoot. Whatever the brainstorming leads to is used as the basis for the shoot, in terms of theme and concept. I do both outdoor and indoor shoots (usually at my own studio). A normal shoot lasts for eight to nine hours."*

*Fashion Week 2006*

and professionalism shown. When I first started, there was of course negotiations for many accounts. But now that I have a well established portfolio and a name, there is very little in terms of painful negotiations. I usually deal with agencies and they know the rates for well established photographers. So we are always playing in a known ball park, so to speak.

*Magie Fashion*

**PBM:** How much influence does your employer have on the artistic side of the photograph?

Minimal. The client walks in with their thoughts. The interpretation and the artistic bend is usually the value that I add. Having said that, it is important to keep the client involved during the process. This is just to avoid surprises at the very end. I keep my clients well informed, and they are party to in-progress concepts and stills, which they can monitor and comment on. A digital work flow makes this interactive process really easy and cost-effective, as all you need is a laptop and a screen for the most part.

*Ela Danial*

**PBM:** How important is photoshop in your workflow and industry ?

To be honest, I'd say that Photoshop and Photography share equal importance in my industry. A lot of people outwardly like to state that they don't use photoshop, or use very less of it. Most often, the reality is quite different from what they preach. In this industry, photoshop is a key element (at least the way I see it). I use photoshop extensively to clear skin-tones, contrast, adjustment and other aspects to make the model more *fashion presentable.* Having said that, we never use photoshop to change the intent of the shoot in a way that the modified version has little relevance to the original.

**PBM:** Are there any artistic challenges you deal with when shooting an advertisement for a company who might want the ad to look one way and you want something different?

Yes, very often. That is reality, and is also why you need to keep the client well-informed. The way to handle such challenges also comes with experience. In situations that could potentially lead to conflicts, I start with what the client wants and then slowly make him come my way in a logical fashion. Very often, if you are sure about an approach, and can explain it logically, the client will accept and respect your interpretation, because you are known in the industry for producing good work. Of course, there are situations where the client's interpretation has merit, and I am always open to a two way dialogue.

**PBM:** When dealing with the models, how do you coach them to pose the way you want them to?

This is something that comes to you with experience. In my initial years, I had to work harder to make the model comfortable, because I too was discovering what was the *sweet spot* where instructions and conversation meet in such a way that the model is not uncomfortable doing what you want them to do. These days, it comes very easily to me. I give them easy verbal instructions and if the need be, I even pose and show them. I place a huge mirror in front of the model, so that the model can observe the pose for themselves – this is very useful to them.

These days, I am on the panel of five different institutes, which included Elite Modeling (a very well known institue here in India). I also teach camera posing at various insititutes, where models are given tips on what works or does not work for them, when facing a camera.

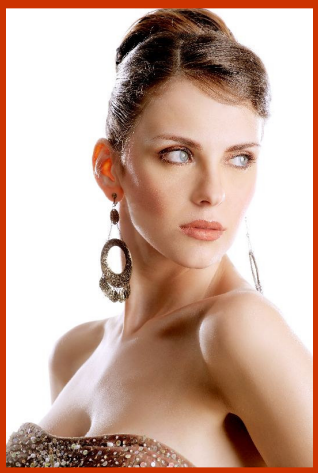
I also encourage cracking jokes with the model to help them loosen up.

**PBM:** Could you provide any tips on camera posing for models ?

Each individual is unique. I've had many new aspiring models knock on my door with cut-outs from magazines, featuring famous actors/models asking to be photographed in a similar way. The problem is that each individual has a personality trait that needs to be leveraged for a successful shoot. More often than not, magazine cut-outs of other people do not suit the aspirants. I try to talk to them to realize their own uniqueness and focus on that instead. So, no, there is no generic tip on camera posing.

*Angi*

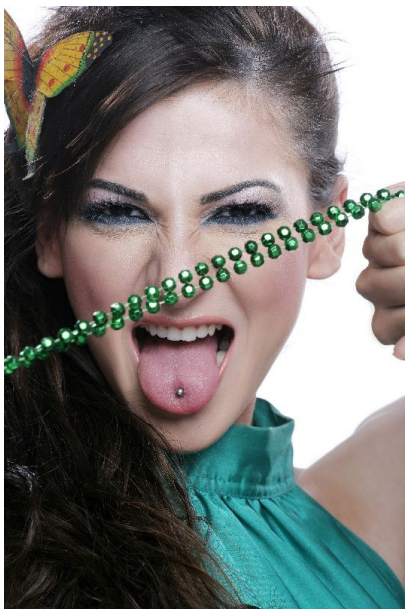
*"A lot of people outwardly like to state that they don't use photoshop, or use very less of it. Most often, the reality is quite different from what they preach. In this industry, photoshop is a key element (at least the way I see it). I use photoshop extensively to clear skin-tones, contrast, adjustment and other aspects to make the model more fashion presentable. Having said that, we never use photoshop to change the intent of the shoot in a way that the modified version has little relevance to the original"*



*Magie*

**PBM:** When shooting a model, approximately how many photos do you take before you get the perfect one?

Depends on the model. With new or first timers it takes around thirty to forty shots to come out with a good one. With an experienced model it comes easily in ten shots. However, that does not mean I only take ten or forty shots per session. Sometimes, and this depends on the account I am working on, I even take upto five hundred images. I also have an assistant who is constantly monitoring my shots (my camera is always tethered to my laptop) and provides me inputs on them. In this industry, you really cannot afford to miss a great shot in a session, since re-doing it is a very expensive proposition and may have serious impacts on the launch for the client.



*Dubai Cover Page*

**PBM:** What is your definition of an experienced model ?

It's hard to define. *You feel it in minutes. The b*ody language, the fludity, and facial expression is just there. And this does not only hold true for seasoned models – some first times too amaze you with their *natural ability* which many other models cannot achieve even after years.

**PBM:** When do you know you are done with a photo shoot?

When I am fairly satisfied with what I have captured. I usually plan the objectives of a session before I start and track them to closure.

**PBM:** Do you ever get to keep the product you are shooting an advertisement for?

No. I am purely into fashion shoots and do not shoot products. But yes, sometimes the client does present accessories like bags, belts and such which I add to my existing collection if good enough.

**PBM:** You seem to have worked with both Indian and International models. How different is it, working with both kinds?

Both are equally good but my preference is for European models. They have excellent skin and body language which simplifies a photographer's job to a great extent. On the other hand the Indian beauty never fails to impress. I have had the pleasure to work with some of the best Indian models and the experience was no less than what I have working with international models.

*Neha, Russian Designer*

**PBM:** Have you ever photographed any celebrities and/or Bollywood actors? What was that like (their attitude, their agents)?

Yes I have clicked many celebrities from TV stars to movie stars. Attitude was never a problem with me since I managed to break ice with them very easily. And for those who had a big ego, I am very effective in working my way through thawing the ice.

**PBM:** How do you break ice with people who usually have immensely big egos ? (Especially considering that many A grade Bollywood actors are almost worshipped in India)

It takes patience, good music, good ambience and a positive attitude, no matter what. I have had experiences where famous actors wouldn't even want to communicate with my makeup artists. You need to play cool with them – be patient, work with them. Even if it means faking chemistry at times. Be very professional – don't get into an attitude fight – it will spoil whatever you could have achieved.

**PBM:** The fashion industry is incredibly cut-throat. What are some tricks to staying afloat and remaining popular with your clients and co-workers?

Just be yourself. You can find many who are imposters or people who just pretend and the industry is full of them. My USP is definitely my

*"I've had many new aspiring models knock on my door with cut-outs from magazines, featuring famous actors/models asking to be photographed in a similar way. The problem is that each individual has a personality trait that needs to be leveraged for a successful shoot. More often than not, magazine cut-outs of other people do not suit the aspirants. I try to talk to them to realize their own uniqueness and focus on that instead"*

*Magie Cover*

*Mrilanini*

attitude because of which I am able to gain many friends in this industry. Professionalism and good attitude is a key combination.

*Sidra Khan*

**PBM:** Why do people come to you ?

I am a portfolio photographer. A lot of new people approach me for their portfolios. Interestingly, PBase has been a great help to me in this business. When I first started uploading my images online on PBase, I had no idea about its reach, or popularity. I would shoot sessions with models and then upload them to PBase (with their confirmation, of course). Very soon, my galleries became very popular and I had millions of page views from all over the world. This was a great exposure to my models as well. Infact, PBase is really big in India now in the fashion industry. Big agencies like Limelight (they handle Levis, Apple, Airtel) scour PBase looking for talent and art. In the past few years, at least twenty well know Indian photographers have started their own porfolios on PBase and are leveraging the exposure.

**PBM:** Has there ever been a photo shoot that was a disaster?

Yes in the initial years. I remember shooting a big campaign for *Monte Carlo*. I was using a film camera in those days. We spent several days of shooting and planning, only to realize at the end that the film got stuck, and not a single shot came out. You can imagine the situation, because the client had to pay the models, the production unit and so forth. It was really a mess. I told the client that I would reshoot the entire campaign on my own dollar, and this time I did it with a digital camera. The client appreciated this gesture of mine, and was very satisfied with the results. In addition, I have kept the client abreast of the improvements in my process and work, and we have worked regularly together for the past four years, in over twenty shoots. Incidentally that was the last time I ever used a film camera.

**PBM:** Besides models, what else do you like to photograph and why?

Wild life and my kid. Because the originality and spontaneity that I get in them is hard to find in fashion shoots. They give me a strange satisfaction.

**PBM:** On that same token, why do you love photographing models?

With models/fashion photography, you get to see an imaginary concept come to life, where the model and the environment play a part in making it come true. That gives me a lot of thrill.

**PBM:** You seem to be a perfectionist. Does that ever get in your way?

I am perfectionist to the core. And sometimes I myself want to stop, because we are *close enough* but the zeal to not leave a single leaf unturned takes over and pushes me to continue till I get what I want. At times, I find myself shooting 20GB and upto 500 images for a single shoot, in search of the right combination.

*Natasha, Dubai Image*

**PBM:** You also teach photography. What is the number one thing you stress to your students about this art?

Learn to have passion for what you do. It is only then that your work satisfies you.

**PBM:** With such success at a young age, where do you intend to go from here?

Well, I am 30 now. I hope to add to the Delhi studio with one in Bombay. And the final destination is Milan, the fashion capital.

*Dolly*

*"I remember shooting a big campaign for Monte Carlo. I was using a film camera in those days. We spent several days of shooting and planning, only to realize at the end that the film got stuck, and not a single shot came out. You can imagine the situation, because the client had to pay the models, the production unit and so forth. It was really a mess.*

*I told the client that I would reshoot the entire campaign on my own dollar, and this time I did it with a digital camera. The client appreciated this gesture of mine, and was very satisfied with the results*

*Incidentally that was the last time I ever used a film camera"*

*Ujini*

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

# PHOTOSHOPOGRAPHY: Artistic Interpretations

Stephen LeQuier (AKA Trimoon) has been a user of Photoshop since its inception and a photographer for six years. His interest in photography is mostly nature related. He likes to turn his images into works of art that emulate traditional mediums. Before becoming an artist and a photographer, Stephen ran his own art reproduction company and did photo restorations. These days, he enjoys sharing his techniques through tutorials and one-on-one lessons. He occasionally will do work for other photographers. In addition to his site at PBase, Stephen maintains his own website at www.trimoon.com

To many, retouching has become more than just adjusting a photograph for hue and saturation, contrasts or removing the power line from the background to make the image more appealing. I believe that the manipulation of a photograph is much more. I've become one of the growing numbers of artists who use the freedom of digital manipulation as a way of expressing oneself artistically. With the recent growth of photography fired by the advancements of digital technology, the drop in the cost of digital photography and the instant gratification one gets, it's only natural that there be a growth and market in digital manipulation as well. When I look at a photo for the very first time, I don't see it as the final result but as an under painting, something to build upon. With what other medium can you, on the fly, adjust color, contrast and texture?

If you look through the galleries on PBase or go through the forums, you will see a growing number of people talking about and manipulating images into works of art. They like the look of an oil or watercolor painting, and they wish to emulate this traditional look. Manipulating is a lot of fun. There are some drawbacks. It is addictive. You may start off at six o'clock in the afternoon on a project and the next thing you know, it's after midnight. Go ahead and give it a try. Here's an example of a technique that I recently used on a photo of a tulip by Andy Rossol (aka andy77).

*Final Image*

The original image was:

Download the original image here.

**The Process:**

1. As I do with all my work, I start off by making a duplicate of the background layer (one – each new layer will be named numerically). To duplicate the layer, drag the layer down to the new layer icon at the bottom of the layers palette.

---

2. I want to create an outline of the Tulip. I go up to my menu, and select Image>Adjustment> Desaturate. I duplicate this layer (two), making sure that it's above the desaturated layer. I Then go back up to the menu and select: Image> Adjustment> Invert. This should look something like a negative. I Then set the blending mode to Color Dodge. At this point, your layer should be totally white. Now, go up to the menu to Filter> Blur> Gaussian Blur; set the Radius at 9.9 pixels.

## EXCERPTS:

*"To many, retouching has become more than just adjusting a photograph for hue and saturation, contrasts or removing the power line from the background to make the image more appealing. I believe that the manipulation of a photograph is much more. I've become one of the growing numbers of artists who use the freedom of digital manipulation as a way of expressing oneself artistically"*

*Note: This is the same technique used for creating some pencil sketches. It's been around for a long time. I first came across this technique probably five or six years ago. If you use this in a pencil sketch, you may want to back down the Gaussian Blur just a bit to create more of an outline of your image. You can also use this to either darken or lighten shadows in images; you can even sharpen images using this technique. It all depends on what blending mode you use.*

---

3. I will make a new layer (three) combining everything I've done up to this point. So I go up to my menu to select: Set Selection To: All. Again I go to my menu to edit, Set Selection To: Copy Merged. Back to the menu to edit Set Selection To: Paste. This copies everything that you've done to this point into one layer without disturbing the other layers.

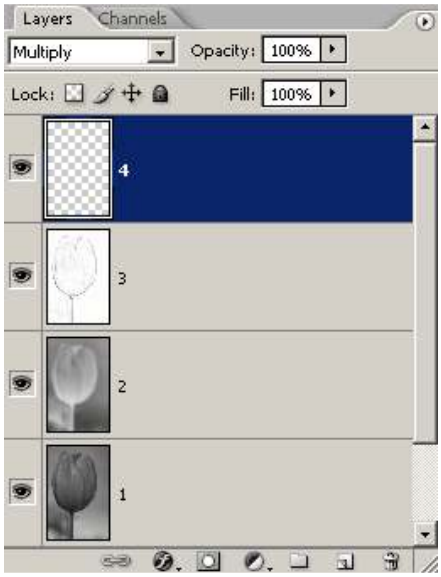
---

4. Now apply the Diffuse Filter. You will find this up on your menu under Filter > Stylize > Diffuse. Set the selection to Anisotropic. This will smooth out some of the bumps in the lines.

---

5. Create a new layer (call it four)

To create a new layer, click on the new layer icon at the bottom of the layers palette. Set the blending mode to Multiply. You can leave the opacity as is or drop it down to 70%. This is up to you; I'm leaving it at 100%.




*Note: If you like, you can go ahead and delete layers 1 and 2; you'll have no further need for them.*

---

**6.** Paint the image using the Art History Brush
I'm using (Art History Brush Tulip 1.abr), This brush (Load as a Brush) you may already have. I just preset some of the numbers to make it easy; I then named it after the Tulip that I'm working on. You can download the "Art History Brush Tulip 1&2" here. The Art History Brush uses the source data from a specified history state or snapshot. If you change the history state at any time during the process of painting, the Art History Brush will cease to function, and you will get an error. Things such as cropping will alter the state of the image. The best thing to do is to make your changes in the beginning. Do your cropping, sizing, color adjustments, and image mode changes first. Then save your image and close and reopen. This gives you a fresh history state to work from.

*"If you look through the galleries on PBase or go through the forums, you will see a growing number of people talking about and manipulating images into works of art. They like the look of an oil or watercolor painting, and they wish to emulate this traditional look. Manipulating is a lot of fun. There are some drawbacks. It is addictive. You may start off at six o'clock in the afternoon on a project and the next thing you know, it's after midnight. Go ahead and give it a try."*

The textures that you're creating while you're painting depend on the actual size of the brush tip, so by adjusting it, you get a different look. Try to keep your lines intact. In other words, paint inside the lines and outside the lines but don't let them overlap. Keep the transitions defined between the background and the foreground. You may want to use a small, very small, tip on the edges of your subject and try not to lose any of the texture that you've already painted in.

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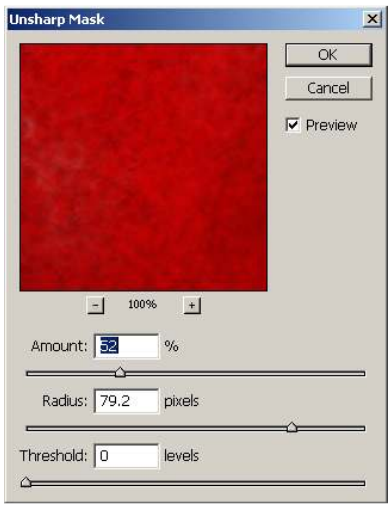
7. Repeat Step three (Name this new layer 'five')

---

8. Now, I will apply an Unsharp Mask (USM)



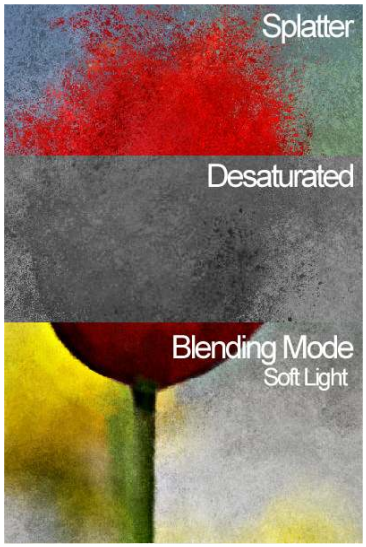

Amount: 52%, Radius: 79.2pixels, Threshold: 0 levels.

---

9.Create another new layer (call it 'six')

Select the Art History Brush (*Art History Brush Tulip 2.abr* – from the Tulip Zip file I provided a link to previously). This is also a brush named after this lesson. Now splatter away and try and create a nice even look, usually three or four clicks/brush strokes will do it. Now I want to desaturate this layer and set the blending mode to Soft Light or try Multiply depending on your image.

*Note: Depending on your image, you may want to apply a little Unsharp Mask at this point, just to sharpen this texture a bit.*

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10. I now flatten the image, apply just a little bit of noise and a little Gaussian Blur. If you are going to display this on the web or digitally, you may want to apply some texture, either paper or canvas. The choices are endless. Just don't apply too much. Be sparing.

I do a lot of texturing - not just for the web, but also for printing. I like the way it diffuses the color and hides unwanted blemishes. My favorite way of texturing an image is to use layers and blending. I will drag a texture over to my image. Next I go to my menu and select Filters> Stylize> Emboss. The settings that I use vary from image to image. For this Tulip I used the following settings: Angle of 140°, Height 3 Pixels, the Amount at 22%.

To decrease the effect of the texture, just adjust the opacity on the flow for this layer. You can also use levels to adjust the effect by increasing or decreasing the contrast.

That completes this technique. I hope you enjoy it. If it's a little too harsh, you can always blend the original photo with the painted version and get a happy medium ~ *Stephen LeQuier*

**Some useful textures for download:**

Canvas 1
Etching 101
Art Paper No. 22

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

# TRAVEL: Khayalethu (S. Africa)

Raymond Ker grew up in the diamond-mining city of Kimberley, South Africa. He is a medical doctor practising in Cape Town and has been photographing consistently since acquiring his first digital camera – a Canon PowerShot A80 – in late 2003. He progressed through a 300D and eventually to his current 20D. He believes the 20D is the end of the road for upgrades for the foreseeable future, and that digital photography has come of age with the 20D and its peers. He has a love for all photographic genres, but has a special affinity for human photography. Besides photography, he has a burning passion for global socio-economic issues, especially economic justice.

**Poverty**

*'Behind the silence of our records and our statistics lie children mutilated in their heart and spirit, young people condemned to despair, adults driven to doubt their very humanity.'*

*~Joseph Wreskinski, founder of ATD Fourth World*

Photographing in the Third World has its own unique aims, challenges, opportunities, fascination and rewards. In my view, because of the distinctive development shortfalls and respective goals, responsible and meaningful photography should courageously but unsentimentally explore both, and champion a humanistic response.

The photography should not merely investigate material poverty (income poverty, absolute poverty, relative poverty), but delve into the overarching issue of human poverty ('a denial of economic, political, social and physical opportunities to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others'-UN) and the pervasive cancer of social exclusion. It should showcase and celebrate our common humanity and destiny, exploiting all the potentialities of the photographic genres to mirror the commonalities of our inner worlds, dreams and aspirations.

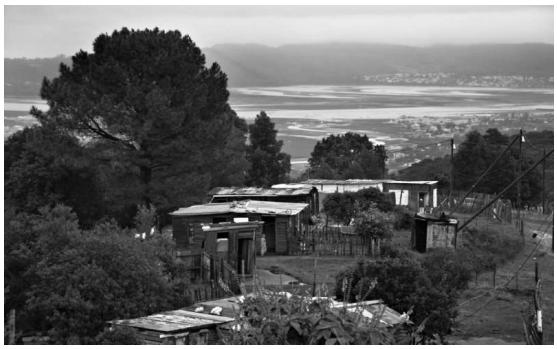
**Third World microcosm**

My gallery "Third World microcosm" represents my first humble and tentative steps towards realising some of these goals. I chose Khayalethu, the sprawling informal settlement on the outskirts of Knysna, a world-renowned tourist mecca and jewel of the Garden Route region of South Africa. Knysna is the epitome of affluence and opportunity for a minority of the economic elite, while to my mind Khayalethu is a microcosm of Third World poverty and socio-economic challenges for the masses.

Knysna/Khayalethu is more than 500km from my home in Cape Town and I realised that my meagre budget and annual leave constraints would allow a ludicrous period of no more than 10 days to investigate the complex socio-economic reality and to document it photographically.

My challenge was thus to get to interact intimately with as many of the members of the community in the shortest possible time. I had several approaches to realise this objective:

The first was volunteering to work at the local primary health clinic when I discovered that their



*Khayalethu overlooking Knysna*

medical doctor was on leave for several weeks, and the clinical nurse practitioner had the onerous responsibility of caring for so many seriously ill patients. My intention was to treat as many patients as possible during the mornings to lighten the load on the nursing sister, and then to visit these patients in their homes during the afternoons and evenings.

I joined the district nurse and assisted her on her rounds throughout Khayalethu, getting to know the settlement and the people intimately – and obtained convenient introductions to many more homes for later visits. I liaised with the local Hospice movement who allowed me to accompany their nurse and home based carers on their ministrations to the terminally ill AIDS and cancer patients.

I tracked down the local community leaders and they introduced me to four community development workers (CDWs) – warm, caring, and compassionate human beings. I was deeply moved by their great generosity of spirit, devoting all of their spare time to making a difference in the lives of their fellow-citizens. They gave me a crash course in the development issues of the area and took me to meet their clients in the evenings.

After one week of intensive interaction with the community, I felt that I had at least scratched the surface and to some extent could appreciate the scale of the human tragedy: the horrendous levels of infant mortality, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, unemployment, alcoholism/substance abuse, violent crime, teenage pregnancies, etc.

But far more valuable were the insights I obtained into the human aspects and psychic ramifications of poverty – especially social exclusion. About how relentless poverty ultimately is, annihilating the human spirit, leaving the victim deprived of hope, confidence and dignity. About the psychic defence mechanisms that make the poor appear so

## SIDEBAR:

*Typical Khayalethu dwelling*

*"The photography should not merely investigate material poverty (income poverty, absolute poverty, relative poverty), but delve into the overarching issue of human poverty ('a denial of economic, political, social and physical opportunities to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others'-UN) and the pervasive cancer of social exclusion. It should showcase and celebrate our common humanity and destiny, exploiting all the potentialities of the photographic genres to mirror the commonalities of our inner worlds, dreams and aspirations"*

*Quiet Dignity*

apathetic, hopeless, dependent and without the capacity to think rationally about their plight. How they decry the almost universal trend of valuing everything and everyone in terms of money. Whereas, if more humanistic yardsticks were used, using humanity as the denomination, the poor would be found to be rich. And they would be respected not for what the own but for who they are, recognizing their supreme value as human beings.

In the final analysis, the most damning indictment against the rest of society is the denial and abuse of human rights because it obliterates human dignity and engenders humiliation, powerlessness, injustice and exclusion.

**Symbiosis**

As a consequence of my Khayalethu experience, I've discovered in my life a powerful symbiosis between photography and social enquiry: My passion for social enquiry and social justice has intensified the striving for authenticity and integrity in the photographic documentation of Third World poverty. The converse is that the motivation to achieve photographic veracity and eloquence has deepened the social investigation – I would ordinarily never have devoted ten full days to attempt such a comprehensive analysis.

**The photography**

After the marathon first week I was left with only a couple of days to do all the photography – but the groundwork had been laid. The photography was effortless and a joy to undertake because the subjects were completely at ease with me by then, and were natural and unselfconscious. I was probably viewed as a friendly but eccentric doctor who happens to tote around a camera and is quaintly trigger-happy!

**"A beauty full of hope …."**

I paid a return visit to Karel after my initial introduction by one of the CDWs. He is a retired lumberjack and he had me spellbound with his reminiscences of four decades of work in the depths of the Knysna forest and of the ravages of apartheid. The conversation then drifted onto the topic of poverty. He could not articulate precisely how he experienced poverty and how it impacted on his psyche. But a recurring theme was the deep hurt engendered by the lack of respect and the contempt he encountered from wealthy fellow-citizens. One could also sense that the social exclusion was profoundly painful – the deep wounds of alienation and estrangement from the wider society. And probably also the awareness that he and his children/grandchildren will never be able to realise their full potential and contribute their unique knowledge and experience to society as equals.

*Zenobia and Karel (grand-dad)*

Throughout our discussion, his granddaughter, Zenobia, was industriously engaged in innumerable household chores, carrying her ubiquitous cup of coffee to every corner of the house. I seized the opportunity of utilizing her and her coffee as a focal point and theme to photograph a typical home in the settlement. What an amazingly angelic little girl with innate dignity and poise, described by a colleague as "a beauty full of hope, a smile to melt you".

*A beauty full of hope*

**Ezekiel's Ubuntu**

Another fascinating discussion I had during my last days of shooting was with Ezekiel, a retrenched carpenter's assistant and undiscovered philosopher. He was intrigued that I was familiar with the concept of Ubuntu and became exceedingly animated, waxing eloquent with his exposition of the philosophy and paradigm of Ubuntu, as well as his general world-view.

This is a profound concept that is exceedingly difficult to explain to non-Africans and is still rather nebulous to me. The cardinal belief is that a person can be a person only through other people. The underpinning values are group solidarity, compassion, respect, human dignity and collective unity. This is pivotal to the survival and progress of communities who, as a result of poverty and deprivation, have to survive through group care (Mbigi & Maree, 1995). This applies equally to all marginalised communities, from Harlem (NY) to Brixton (UK). A related concept is "philanthropy of community", which describes relations of help among and between poor people, including both material and non-material assistance (time, skills and emotional support).

*"As a consequence of my Khayalethu experience, I've discovered in my life a powerful symbiosis between photography and social enquiry: My passion for social enquiry and social justice has intensified the striving for authenticity and integrity in the photographic documentation of Third World poverty"*

*Multitasking Malta*

*"The cardinal belief is that a person can be a person only through other people. The underpinning values are group solidarity, compassion, respect, human dignity and collective unity. This is pivotal to the survival and progress of communities who, as a result of poverty and deprivation, have to survive through group care" (Mbigi & Maree, 1995)*

*Boys will be boys*

I told him that I encountered the spirit of Ubuntu constantly and in great measure during my visit to Khayalethu. That this was my most powerful and enduring lesson. He added that this is the philosophy that everyone lives and that the term is rarely used. He likened it to the situation in affluent countries where much of the citizens' lives are devoted to consumerism, yet that word is seldom used.

During our discussion he noticed that the biting mid-winter cold was taking its toll on his frail urban guest and started chopping kindling wood for a fire. I groped for my camera in the gloom, selecting the widest aperture and high ISO to compensate for my violently shivering hands, praying that I had captured that precious moment competently.

*Ezekiel's Ubuntu*

**Window-bound by polio**

Gertrude was paralysed by polio from the waist down during infancy. She is generally housebound and spends most of the day leaning out of her window socializing and dispensing her wisdom. Friends and admirers would drop by and lounge around on the grass beneath her window or cram into her poky room. The philosopher, poet and seer in her would then emerge and enthral the throng. The atmosphere was electric, joyous and celebratory. This is a picture that will live with me forever.

*Window-bound by polio*

**21st Century Dickensian settlement**

I overslept on the last morning after revelling and cavorting until an unearthly hour with my newfound friends, and awoke to the miraculous sight of mist enveloping the distant mountains and hills in which Khayalethu nestles. What ensued was a frantic race against time, bleary-eyed and dishevelled, to capture the Dickensian atmosphere before the mist dissipated. I was able to shoot off a few frames with mere minutes to spare – with barely adequate mentation for composition and to select a high ISO to accentuate noise.

*21st century Dickensian settlement*

**Blessings**

I count myself blessed to have had the good fortune to experience the richness of life in Khayalethu and will be eternally grateful to the host of wonderful people who opened their hearts and homes to me, broadening my mind and consciousness with invaluable lessons.

*Teenager's Dilemna*

*God's Children*

*Granny Magriet*

*"I count myself blessed to have had the good fortune to experience the richness of life in Khayalethu and will be eternally grateful to the host of wonderful people who opened their hearts and homes to me, broadening my mind and consciousness with invaluable lessons"*

*Tea Ceremony*

*Exuberance*

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

# GEAR-TALK: Huey Pantone

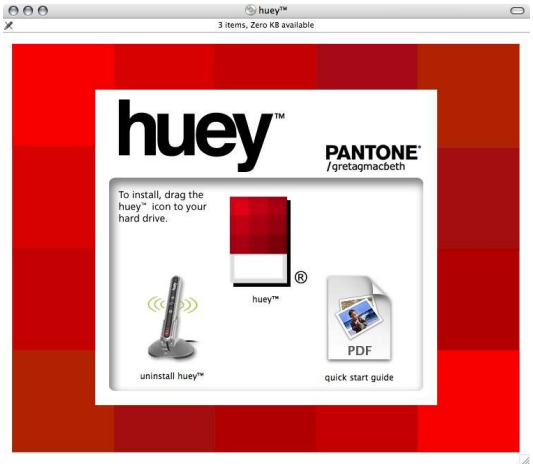
It's been a while since our last gear-talk feature. For this issue, we decided to host a user report on the more affordable monitor calibration tools in the market and point out to our readers, how simple and important monitor calibration really is. We requested Andy to write up a simple and visual user report of the Huey Pantone.

Andy Williams is a professional photographer and General Manager of SmugMug, where he also plays the benevolent role of a 'House Pro' . Andy's business centers around doing portrait and event work, and his artistic interests tend toward street photography and landscapes. Andy's work can be seen at www.moonriverphotography.com

Monitor Calibration sure isn't easy. Or rather, it wasn't. Along came Huey, from Pantone. I have used other Calibration devices, namely Gretag Macbeth's Eye-One. So, what's different? Well, for starters, the price. Huey goes for about $90 *[ed: $70 now from many retailers]*, street. Most of the other calibration devices out there are $150, $250, and more. But for $90, does it work? For many folks, this is a great starting point into the world of color calibration - and for the advanced procrastinator, too, it's a great way to remove some of the mystery.

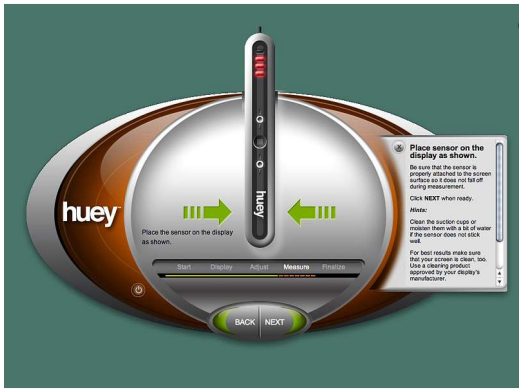
Why calibrate? It's so important to be sure you are getting great skin tones and to be sure that what you see on screen, matches what you print.

Open the box and install the disk. On a Mac, you simply drag the Huey icon to your apps folder. Installation was a snap.

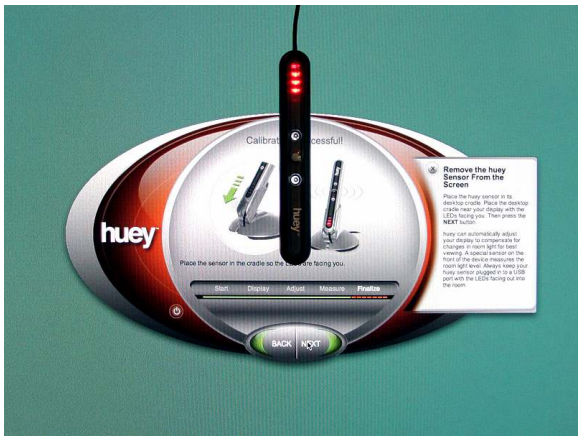



Huey is about 5" tall, and sits unobrusively in his own little dock.

You plug Huey into your USB port, launch the software, and Huey asks you to let him measure the room light, which takes about 15 seconds. Then, after telling Huey what kind of monitor you are calibrating, you get this screen, telling you to place Huey on your monitor. It's dead simple.




Here he is, on my Apple 23" Cinema Display. Huey then goes and measures the colors, the gamma, and generally does his own thing for about 2 minutes.




Calibration successful! Take Huey off, and put him in the dock.

Just at the end, you get a before / after toggle, to show you the difference between color corrected and uncorrected. It's very easy, and the difference will probably surprise you.

## CAVEATS:

*By Arjun*

*Do note that the Huey does not support multiple monitor profiles.*

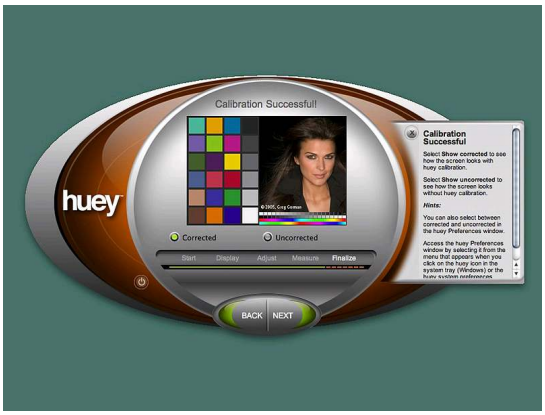
*In addition, the Huey does not support printer calibration like the more expensive calibration options.*

*In my experience, the Huey suction cups lose their suction power soon and may cause the calibration tool to slide down your monitor after repeated use. I would suggest you brace the colorimeter if possible. I often keep a finger in it, at some safe corner.*

*Finally, be a little careful of the USB cable connector. The cable is flimsy, so if you plan to take it along with you for trips, make sure you don't yank it hard.*

*Having said the above, for the price, it is a great price vs. feature solution.*

*If you are looking for an alternate solution at a similar price, take a look at ColorVision's Spyder2 express*

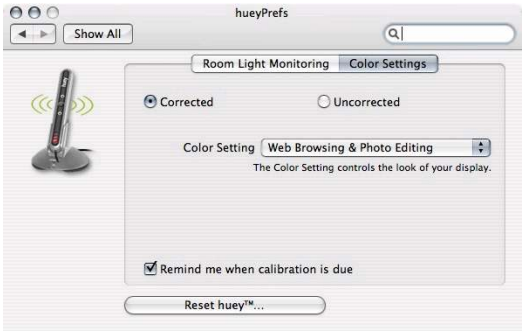



On a Mac, Huey lives in your System Preferences (lower left).

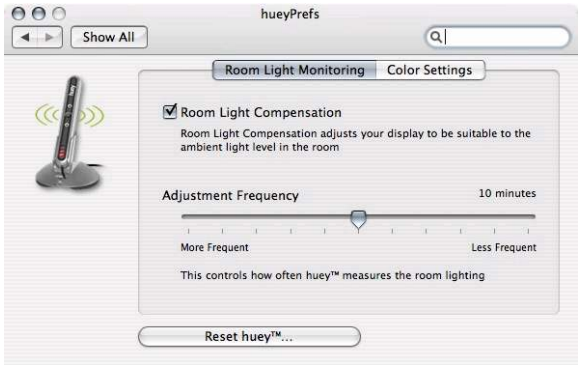
On windows, you can find the Huey icon in your system tray (the red icon with a white strip)

By the way, when browsing the web on your Mac, beware of browser color differences.

There are two areas of settings, one for the type of color work you are doing (gaming, photos, movies, low/high contrast, and warm / cool.




Here's a neat feature and something that the bigger more expensive units don't have. Huey will continously read the ambient room light and adjust your screen color to compensate.




**Conclusion** A fine tool, well made, the software is easy to use and understand. Installation is a breeze, and regular usage (critical for consistently accurate color) won't cause you to curl up in the fetal position and whimper at your moniotr. The calibration is accurate, as measured against my previous calibrations with the Eye-One. The added benefit of the room-light monitoring makes this unit a winner. What more could we ask for?

### Additional Information

THIS PART OF THE ARTICLE HAS BEEN AUTHORED BY ARJUN ROYCHOWDHURY

It seems that certain earlier versions of the Huey Pantone has known issues with certain monitors. I was unlucky enough to buy one of those earlier models from Amazon. When I calibrated and set up my Dell 1905FP monitor in office, I noticed that the colors were a little washed out. When I took the device home, where I have a Viewsonic VA912B monitor, Huey produced a strong brown tint, which was certainly not right, even to the untrained eye. I contacted Pantone support and reported the issue. In the past, I haven't had good experience with "tech support" with 1-8xx numbers, but Pantone was very different. It took me less than a minute to reach a technical person. From speaking with him, I could make out he was not a 'Tier 1 clueless tech-rep' but quite knowledgeable. I described my problem and mentioned that I tried everything including updating the latest video drivers.

The pantone tech support folks told me that this was a known issue with earlier versions and they would send me a re-engineered version as soon as I ran a special utility that obtained Huey's internal serial number. I did as requested – and all of this was neatly tracked and documented in their website, askpantone.com (when you click on "My Stuff").

I received the re-engineered pantone in less than a week in a ziploc bag, inside a yellow envelope. I am happy to say that the new tool works great – no brown casts, no washed out effects. If it helps, the old one had a serial number starting with *23xxx* and the new one was *33xxx.*

## PROFILES:

*By Arjun*

*Even though the Huey documentation says it does not support multiple profiles, I am pretty sure one could manually fiddle with the stored profiles and have Huey use the one you want.*

*I have been testing Huey on a Windows machine – after the calibration is over, Huey stores the generated profile in the default Windows color directory. It also stores it's computed configurations in the Application Data area. The nice thing is that for each monitor Huey profiles, it creates* ***separate*** color and config profiles.

Of course, I tried exiting Huey and manually swapping profile information between two monitor calibrations by copying from one to another, but Huey managed to undo my changes and use it's own, stored somewhere else.

So I have a strong suspicion that the Huey is capable of multiple profiles (not simultaneous multiple profiles), but is artificially crippled due to it's market positioning.

I wish Pantone would tell us how to make it manually (at least) switch profiles, since many of us use a laptop, which docks into larger monitors (I use one in office and one at home), and even though we don't need simultaneous multi-monitor support (admitedly a more *pro* requirement), it sure is helpful to get to switch between them, using only one profile at a time.

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

# CULTURE CAULDRON: The Netherlands

Portuguese/Spanish by birth, Paul Teixeira works and lives near Amsterdam, the capital of The Netherlands, Europe. He left his birth town Lisbon at the age of five, having no say whatsoever in the emigration plans of his parents. Teixeira started in the mid 1980's as a freelance photojournalist in The Netherlands, working for international press agencies, Dutch newspapers and magazines, covering a variety of subjects: from portraits of politicians, squatter riots to documentary series on Pope John Paul II and senior citizens. He went on to study journalism (both written and photojournalism) at the School *Voor De Journalistiek* in Utrecht. After completing this study, Teixeira went on to work as a reporter, editor-in-chief and publisher at various publishing companies in The Netherlands, Belgium and Spain. He's currently co-owner of Sandbox Publishers, a Dutch publishing company specialised in business magazines, and tries to combine that with working for World Picture News , a leading photo press agency

.

**If it ain't Dutch, it ain't much**

Right, so I'm not quite what one would characterise as a 'typical Dutchman'. I was born in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, and my parents are Spanish and Portuguese. But despite not having real blood ties to the Netherlands, it's still the country that I feel most comfortable living in.

The Netherlands have been my home for about thirty-six years now. During these years, I've travelled and worked abroad, lived in Spain and Belgium amongst other places, but there's something about the Dutch and the 'Low Lands' that has a certain appeal to me. It could be the general tolerance that they display towards people. Or it could be the quaintness of the flat landscape. To be honest, I don't really know.

**The Low Lands**

How can one describe The Netherlands? I think the CIA Factbook does a fairly good job. *"The Kingdom of the Netherlands was formed in 1815. In 1830 Belgium seceded and formed a separate kingdom. The Netherlands remained neutral in World War I, but suffered invasion and occupation by Germany in World War II. A modern, industrialized nation, the Netherlands is also a large exporter of agricultural products. The country was a founding member of NATO and the EEC (now the European Union), and participated in the introduction of the euro in 1999."* The Netherlands is also a small country (16,491,461 inhabitants living in 41,526 square kilometers).

*Not a mountain in sight – the Netherlands*

The most well known export products are tulips and substances that are, uh, slightly less legal than flowers. The CIA Factbook again: *"It is a major European producer of ecstasy, illicit amphetamines, and other synthetic drugs; important gateway for cocaine, heroin, and hashish entering Europe; major source of US-bound ecstasy."*

Not exactly stuff that would make one proud. But it's also the birth place of painters (Rembrandt, for example), soccer players (Johan Cruijff), musicians (the Van Halen brothers), film directors (Oscar winning Fons Rademakers) and even large corporations (Unilever, Philips and Shell for example). And let's not forget the windmills, the cheese and that little kid that saved the country by putting his finger into the life threatening hole in the dikes.

*Typical Dutch: Windmills and cows*

**Typical Dutch?**

I live near Amsterdam, the capital of The Netherlands. A place where you can find Coffeeshops that don't sell coffee but offer a large variety of smokable 'herbs'. Where tolerance and a laid back attitude are a part of the culture. Some argue that Amsterdam is indeed a whole different sub-nation within The Netherlands, but I beg to differ. True: the abundance of coffeeshops are unmatched throughout this tiny country, but the Dutch mentality is the same wherever you go. As relaxed as they are, they can get rather fired up. For example when the Dutch national soccer team manages to get into the World Cup. Or when there's a good protest to attend (especially when it concers government policy: the Dutch don't really care a lot for politicians, but that's hardly an exclusive Dutch trait, is it?)

## DUTCH TALK:

*Paul Teixeira went back to photojournalism, his original profession, about three years ago. He bought his first digital SLR, a Canon 1D, as a backup body for his old but proven Canon F1's. After one week of working digitally, the good old film camera's got a permanent space in a cupboard. Nowadays he still uses his Canon 1D, accompanied by a 1D Mark II and a variety of L lenses.*

*Nation wide garage sale on Queen's day is the ideal occasion to get rid of all kinds of 'useful junk'*

*Orange madness in the streets during the World Cup Soccer championship*

*Protest against government in Amsterdam*

**The Dutch cuisine**

If there's such a thing here. Remember the Quentin Tarantino movie 'Pulp Fiction'? One of the lead characters has been to Amsterdam. And he tells this strange tale: the Dutch eat mayonaise with their French fries. It's true. They do. And so do I. It's actually quite good. Which can't be said of about 80 procent of the Dutch cuisine. It consists mainly of hearty stews combined with fruits and mash combinations. Ideally suited for those long cold winter evenings. But what can one eat during the rest of the year? Luckily there are plenty of foreign restaurants that cater for that. Although I must confess that 'Haring' is way up there on my list of favorites (raw herring eaten with chopped onion and gurkins, try it!). *[ed: Hey Paul, what about Kibbeling ? I loved that fried fish]*

**The Obsession**

Another thing that's a Dutch phenomen, is their fondness (or should one say 'obsessivness') of bikes. Biking is hot here. Virtually every Dutchman has one and rides one. And if they don't have one, they steal one. In fact, bike stealing is a big thing here. A lot of bikes get stolen in The Netherlands. It could be characterised as the 'Number One' crime here. And still, in the long run, nobody seems to overly care. Certainly not the police. It's considered a fact of life. You buy a bike, it gets stolen, you're upset and you buy another bike. Just to get the whole process repeated once again. Weird.

*Insurance against bike theft – make it look different*

**The Language**

And then there's the language. *Dutch*. Ever heard anyone speak Dutch? No? It's a real treat, I can tell you. A bit like German, but then spoken like you've got a severe cold. No wonder virtually no one speaks it outside The Netherlands. And still it has allowed some wonderfull poets and writers to produce great poems, books and plays.

Reading back these last paragraphs, I wonder if I'm too cynical or overly critical of the country that has welcomed me years ago? I don't think so. It's just that loving something or someone that much doesn't make one blind for the awkward habits and quirks. On the contrary.

*Riots in Utrecht during the papal visit in 1985*

**What is typical Dutch anyway?**

To shatter one myth: they're not cheapskates. Indeed, The Netherlands and its inhabitants are one of the biggest contributors when it comes to donating money to Developing nations. I know that the expression 'Going Dutch' is widely known, but it doesn't do credit to the Dutch. They've just have a strong feeling for all matters financially. Which explains the succes this part of of the world has had in trading. With perhaps one major historical slip up: the Dutch sold Manhattan (in the United States of America) for virtually nothing. If only they had known…

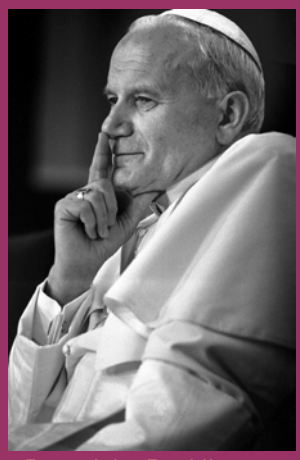
**Amsterdam: Places to go, people to see**

*Name one city in The Netherlands.* …Well?

There's a big chance that you've answered with 'Amsterdam'.

For some tourists it's appeal lies in the picturesque homes (called *'grachtenhuizen'* and sometimes dating back till 1457) and canals, the latter making it one of the 'Venices of the North'. And it's indeed a pleasure to have a casual stroll alongside the canals that run through the old center of the city. Or even better: do a sightseeing cruise (preferably at night, while having a candle light dinner) through the canals. I know it sounds cheesy, but even I do that every once in a while.

There's enough to see and to do in Amsterdam. If you get tired looking at the old houses, you can always do a decent bit of shopping in the many boutiques or have a cup of coffee and some Dutch apple pie in one of the cafés. Avoid the 'coffeeshops', unless you're not really looking for coffee but instead would prefer another herbal refreshment like a joint, space cake or even 'space tea'. Strictly speaking, soft drugs aren't legal in The Netherlands. But the authorities tend to look the other way if you're smoking, eating or drinking the stuff in coffeeshops.



*Pope John Paul II (Netherlands, 1985)*

*"Virtually every Dutchman has one and rides one. And if they don't have one, they steal one. In fact, bike stealing is a big thing here. A lot of bikes get stolen in The Netherlands ... And still, in the long run, nobody seems to overly care. Certainly not the police. It's considered a fact of life. You buy a bike, it gets stolen, you're upset and you buy another bike. Just to get the whole process repeated once again. Weird."*

*Iranian refugees in the Netherlands protesting against their government*

Another famous (or should I say 'infamous'?) aspect of Amsterdam is the Red Light District. To put it quite bluntly: it's an area smack in the middle of the old centre, where prostitutes are waiting for clients, sitting behind the windows of picturesque old houses alongside the canal. The Red Light refers to the lighting that they've put up in the windows. It sounds rather grim but since a great number of tourists flock to the Red Light District, it's actually one of the safest places in Amsterdam to visit. Prostitution, by the way, has been legalised in The Netherlands, to the point that they're paying taxes and even have their own trade union.

*Amsterdam turns into a giant garage sale every 30th of April – celebrating the birthday of the deceased Queen Mum Juliana*

Not every visitor is keen on strolling along the windows of the Red Light District or sitting in a coffeeshop. If you belong to that category, don't despair! Try the flower market instead. And buy yourself lots of tulip bulbs. During the evenings make your way to the hot spot of the old centre: the *Leidseplein*. The place to be if you're looking for a good dinner.
Afterwards you can have a beer (afterall The Netherlands are the home of *Heineken*) in one of the many old pubs in the *Jordaan*, a part of the old centre that has it's own special appeal.

You can engage in all these activities while walking. Amsterdam is but a small city, certainly when compared to cities like New York or Paris.

Or if you're the adventurous type: rent a bike and get a first hand experience of how bikers claim their right of way in Amsterdam. For them traffic lights have a different meaning: yellow is an encouragement to pedal faster and red is just a suggestion that one can ignore whenever deemed necessary. Have fun!

*In need of flowers ? Plenty of those at the flower market in Amsterdam*

*My line of work: photographing protests, like this one againts the Amsterdam government*

*Urbanisation moves into our farmlands*

*"Rent a bike and get a first hand experience of how bikers claim their right of way in Amsterdam. For them traffic lights have a different meaning: yellow is an encouragement to pedal faster and red is just a suggestion that one can ignore whenever deemed necessary"*

*Fons Rademakers, Oscar winning film director*

*Soccer legend Johan Cruijff*

*Papal visit riots claim their first victim (1985)*

# Creative Women in Digital Photography

In this section, we feature a community effort started by a group of people to bring together the works of women photographers and serve as a medium to fuel their passion in digital photography. CWIDP, as they are called, uses PBase as a medium to spread the collective work of several individuals to a large auidence. They also maintain a very active mailing list via Yahoo groups to keep their members creative juices flowing. More power to you !

**Creative Women in Digital Photography:**
*A community built on love for photography and each other.*

*by, Eric Kuhn*

Nichole Dillon-Lee, Leslie Matthews and Lynne Holtrust all have two things in common: *X-chromosomes and a love for digital photography*.

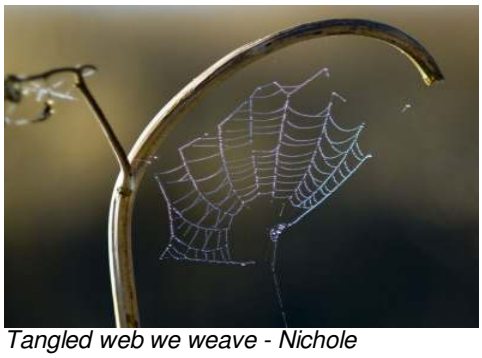
These women are part of a fifty-four person club called Creative Women in Digital Photography (CWIDP), a shared interest group for women who love *"digital photography and having fun."* Hailing from all over the world, they find their second home on their mutual CWIDP PBase Site and Yahoo! Group.

Lynda Reneau, who started CWIDP on November 17, 2004, is referred to by the group members as "our Mama Bear aka 'Boss Lady'" because she is a very protective moderator. Her philosophy and purpose for the group is all positive: "If they were bad photographers, we would make great ones. We would encourage, not discourage. We don't bicker, we applaud. We have learned to love and share." Lynda has witnessed great success stories about women who have turned into phenomenal photographers, with style and confidence. Chances are, ever since the group formed at lease one of their members is in PBase's popular galleries. "We will continue to learn lessons both from photography and life and with the love and friendships shared at CWIDP I feel we will be a long standing group," Lynda said.

Besides the obvious, there are no real criteria to join. Just ask! Maureen has been a member of the group for two short months. "I was welcomed from the very start in spite of my inexperience," she says. "There has been nothing but encouragement from all the group members and there is a willingness to answer any questions I have." With open arms the women welcome anyone, good or bad, new or an old pro. Their philosophy is that everyone can still learn something. CWIDP writes on their site: "There will be something for everyone so bring your cameras, your books, your software, and filters. We will all learn together."

*Handsome 'lil guy - Lynne*

Before one joins, the group gives a strict warning: "This is a very active group." Within a seven day period, slightly less than six hundred messages are placed on their Yahoo! Group board echoing the stereotype that women love to talk! And what do they talk about? Everything! While cameras bring these women together, they are all there to make new friends and enjoy life. Although there are very few rules at CWIDP, sitting on the sidelines is strictly prohibited. If you have a critique, you are expected to share it; if you have a compliment, you are expected to share it; if you have a photograph, you better show it!
Niecy Harris says "The benefits of being a member is you always have an open variety of women to learn new techniques and gives you a whole new perspective of different photographic ops and ideas."



*Tangled web we weave - Nichole*

Leslie Matthews, who is known as the "Moderator and Minute Maid," joined this group with fear of not being good enough. The support of her cohorts has eliminated her anxiety. She says, "I have learned to put aside my fears of not being a good photographer. I have learned so much from this group that has allowed me to become a much better photographer. I even entered a photo contest." But for Leslie, CWIDP is about much more than becoming good photographer. "We are there for each other as a group." They share everything from "…laughter and tears. But most importantly," she says, "I have made some friendships that will withstand the test of time and that is the most important part of this wonderful group."

*Lions - Nichole*

## NUGGETS:

*Very Cheesy French Onion Soup -Toni*

*"We will continue to learn lessons both from photography and life and with the love and friendships shared at CWIDP I feel we will be a long standing group"*

*CWIDP writes on their site: "There will be something for everyone so bring your cameras, your books, your software, and filters. We will all learn together."*

*Burnt Island Bow - Laurie*

This group certainly is not only a cyber one. CWIDP have met in numerous locations from California to Canada. New York City's Central Park Zoo is a favorite meeting spot for many.

Lynn Carmouche found out that one member and her daughter were planning a trip out to California. She called up other group members and five creative women in digital photography made the LA and the Hollywood Hills paparazzi look like amateurs! "We had a chance to hang out for a day," she said. "Not only was it about going out to photograph together but it was about meeting someone I felt I have known for many years."

*Thistle - Cathy*

Lynn joined two and a half years ago when she was a self described novice digital SLR photographer. She immediately noticed that all the women made her feel at home. "I had been in other groups where there was a lot of bickering and competition between members. I didn't find any of this here," she says. "My work was complimented and given constructive criticism. I was challenged to try new things and given help whenever I asked." Lynn also actively recruited two of her friends to the group and a major CWIDP get-together is in the works.

Nichole Dillon-Lee, while she has never met any other women face-to-face, feels like they are all family. She says, "Here we have our own Ya Ya Sisterhood. I am so proud to be a part of the group of amazing ladies!"

Marilyn K. Holmberg calls herself a "CWIDPaholic." She says, "I love the 'sisterhood' we've created here. I've never been in a group that was more willing to help whether it be photography or personal. There is a core of us that remain faithful to the 'sisterhood,' post lots, and yap even more. The rest kind of get overwhelmed, I think, and come and go!!"

All don't join to converse, however. Gina is from the Netherlands and has joined the group a month ago. She says, "Joining the group I discovered there is a lot of chatting going on." Gina is not a chatterer due to lack of time, the time difference (most of the interaction happens while she is sleeping) and simply because she is "not so much of a chatterer, anyway" due to the language differences. "I do like the quality of photos," she says. "That's my main reason for joining this group: inspiration."

*Untitled - Jeanne Newman*

Sheila Richardson found the group by scanning the Yahoo! groups. She joined to receive feedback on her work, share her own knowledge and inspire and be inspired. But she did not know what she was getting herself into. Not only did she receive everything she was expecting, but "I've gotten a sisterhood of women where we share our trials, tribulations, and celebrations of not only photography, but work, family, womanhood, and everything in life, in general," she says. "We are all so diverse on one level, but so similar, too." Most share a love for pets and nature and when a four-legged friend passes away, the woman join together to grieve.

CWIDP is also a support group when it comes to justifying a major photo purchase. "Isn't that what friends do for each other? We keep each other going toward the pursuit of learning and becoming better photographers," says Sheila. A year and a half ago, she would have been embarrassed to show her work if she felt it was not up to par. That attitude has since changed. "We also support each other in our goals. That's what we want to keep fostering here. We want to continue to raise the bar for each other."

While CWIDP is a place to share a love of digital photography, it is also a place to simply sit back and enjoy. Their motto is the simple cliché: "When life gives us lemons, let's make lemonade!" But in typical CWIDP style, they add some spice to the slogan, continuing: "Coffee pots welcome too. Some members can't function without it!"

Lynne Holtrust is from Ontario, Canada. Her day job is a sheep farmer and you can bet some of the other women have bought her wool! She says, "We are all different, from different backgrounds, places, lifestyles. And yet, we all have so many things in common with photography being only a part of the camaraderie we share. We have laughed together and we have cried together and we share our love of photography."

*Gillian G. - Jeanne*

*Yummy - Lynne*

*Sunflower - Toni*

# LEARNING:Macro Photography

Tom Warren is a retired musician. For him, photography has been an on-off hobby for over 30 years. He learned much from Ed Lee ( St Louis professsional, Navy photographer) while Ed was stationed around the Atlanta area in the early 1970s. Tom attended seminars at Kodak and Nikon, and worked part time for a local paper during the early days, doing product shots and featured article photos. These days he enjoys insect macro photography, a topic about which he is very enthusiastic.

I think one of the best parts of shooting insects, is the struggle you go through to get the very first good shot. Like a child with his imagination wide open, the passion of throwing yourself into a world of details is endless. What a thrill!

*Red Wasp*

The hunt begins around eight in the morning as I step into my backyard. This morning I know in an instant I'll find a trophy, since there's a crisp feeling in the air I have not felt this year. Even though the journey is short, it takes me into a world which easily could be some distant galaxy. It's a magical place of dragons and beasts and so much beauty in the unexpected. Other thoughts begin to vanish – there are flying machines, and hoppers and crawlers all around, each with fascinating forms and structures in this wonderous land.

I sit gazing into a group of bushes and reach for the coffee cup I had placed before me. A slight breeze moves a leaf and a beam of light causes a glisten, not noticed before. Sitting low on the ground there's a bright yellow flash, so I raise my camera to peer through the lens. I see it's stance and the wave of it's tail high in the air. A threat! But finally it turns and I see my chance and move in closer but it turns again. Too far away, but the best place to begin, I click the shutter and observe the creature's reaction. It seems a bit stunned, then raises it front legs. While wiping my eyes I begin the approach. With each flash I move closer, focusing along the way. Closer and closer and after a few poses, I know not to push too far. So I back up and watch, filing away details to play over again in my mind.

The most often asked question about shooting insects usually goes something like this: *"I have a DSLR with a few lenses, but not a macro. Is there a way I can get good shots even though I'm on a budget? Most lenses are expensive and around $500."*

The answer is, Yes! One of the least expensive lenses which give macro ability is Sigma's 50mm, with life size reproduction. It's sharp and fast and does a nice job. The other major item is the flash. There are several on the market for less than $200 which work fine. The other additional item I suggest is a flash bracket, which will require using an off-camera cable selling for around $50. Then the last item is a softbox which, as the name suggests, simply attaches to the flash making the light less harsh. All of these items can be purchased for less than $500 for great macro shots.

The next question I seem to be asked is, *"How do I use the flash and the settings?"*

Again, this depends on which camera you have, so make sure to check your individual manuals. Since my primary cameras are Canon, there's an easy way to get started. If you'll use manual setting, you'll find it an easy way to begin. Digital cameras using Through The Lens metering (TTL) use a short burst before the main flash to find proper exposure, thus having certain speeds to sync with. It may vary by the camera, so check your manual for proper settings. On the 300d, XT and XTi the maximum speed is 1/200th of a second. I suggest using this setting as a starting point.

Since the exposure is controlled by the flash and body automatically, your only concern is having the f-stop set high enough for good depth of field. I suggest you set your f-stop to f-16 and the ISO at 200 – 400. For most flash units this will be easily within its output range. If using a short lens (50mm or 60mm) the flash may be used on the camera's hotshoe, if the extra accessories aren't available.

*XT, 100, EF 1-1*

The main problem you may encounter in doing this is the lens could possibly block the light from the subject. To minimize this, the addition of a softbox might solve the problem since it can be placed in such a way that it is closer to the front of the lens. Also note when using the manual setting in this way, it is not really necessary to be concerned about what the internal camera light meter says. As explained, you are depending on the flash to handle the light and the automatic detection within the body to set the proper flash

## MACRO QUOTES:

*"I think one of the best parts of shooting insects, is the struggle you go through to get the very first good shot. Like a child with his imagination wide open, the passion of throwing yourself into a world of details is endless. What a thrill!"*

*Hopper Head*

*"The most often asked question about shooting insects usually goes something like this: 'I have a DSLR with a few lenses, but not a macro. Is there a way I can get good shots even though I'm on a budget? Most lenses are expensive and around $500.'*

*The answer is Yes !"*

output for exposure. Once this technique is used, try adjusting the meter closer to proper exposure giving less dependence of the flash output and allow for lighter backgrounds depending on your preference. In bright sunlight, try using different settings if you find a willing subject which stays still. Half the enjoyment is learning new techniques, but this should get you started!

*Lumiquest Mini Softbox*

If you want to try other methods, there are several to choose from. One example is reversing a lens using Macro Couplers, or Adapters which can be used with some point and shoot digitals and all SLR's & DSLR's. They are inexpensive at around $10 and allow mounting of an additional lens face to face with the one on the camera. For any SLR camera, you'll need a medium telephoto lens of 100 to 150mm and a 50mm lens to mount in reverse. On point and shoots, set the lens to maximum zoom.

The reverse mounted 50mm works best if it is a fast lens such as an f1.2 or f1.4. But reasonable results can be acheived using slower ones of f2.8. However, this may result in vignetting of the frame, which can later be cropped. The 50mm should be set to focus on infinity and aperture set at maximum. All adjustments will be done with the longer lens of the camera giving it quiet impressive magnifications (really enjoyable to try). But as a standard set up, it is limited, since focus distance will be from two inches to only a few millimeters from the subject, once again depending on how your combination might perform. It also limits the file size, due the large amount of cropping that you'll do. But, it can be good for some impressive shots for web display. A 50mm lens will give around double life size reproduction, while smaller lenses of 20 to 28mm could give results of 3 or 4 times life size. The vignetting becomes more prominent with wide angle lenses and therefore your cropping increases. For general purpose, a 50mm f1.2 would be best suited for this reason.

*Dimage 7 with reversed 28mm*

Reversing Rings work in a similar way with SLR/DSLR's, except that it allows mounting only your primary lens in reverse on the body. Again, you can find inexpensive ones, for around $20. This should be easier to handle than a two lens combination. The newer models made for Canon offer fully automatic controls, but the cost is more than some 1:1 (life size) macro lenses and gives about the same magnification with less usability. My personal choice would be to purchase the macro lens instead, which will can be more effectively reused for both macro and non-macro situations.

*Cute Bee*

Another favourite option once used extensively during film years, due to the lack of available macro lenses, were Bellows Systems. The accordion styled fabrics were mounted between the body and lens, with a rail system allowing for expansion to control the amount of magnification. The basic principle of these systems works on the principle of increased distance of lens to film (increased magnification results). Their problem is that the amount of light which is lost increases with longer expansions. Again, the ones made today are usually very expensive, difficult to use and therefore not something I would recommend for the average user. All of these systems are very limited, but can give some amazing results when other options aren't (or weren't) available. But in today's market, in my opinion, they are outdated. Depending again on the equipment at hand, should you want to use such systems you can often find used items on ebay which can be purchased. If shooting flowers, the use of an added focus rail can give more control when using them.

Other things which can be used in combination with macro, or non-macro lenses are 35mm Extension Tubes and Close Up Lenses Extension tubes (like bellows) that reduce the amount of light, but can be used very easily in combination with any lens (macro or not). They increase the magnification according to amounts added, depending on the millimeter of the lens. Of course macro lenses have the added advantage of closer focusing distance and larger magnification to begin with. Zoom lenses can be used, but due to their unique characteristics you'd constantly be re-focusing, which isn't always possible depending on the situation. I suggest the use of close up filters (diopters) instead.
When using standard lenses there's a formula used, which should give a rough idea of magnification to millimeters of extension used.

*Red Ant*

*"Another favourite option once used extensively during film years, due to the lack of available macro lenses, were Bellows Systems. The accordion styled fabrics were mounted between the body and lens, with a rail system allowing for expansion to control the amount of magnification. The basic principle of these systems works on the principle of increased distance of lens to film (increased magnification results)"*

*Mantis Profile*

*"The reverse mounted 50mm works best if it is a fast lens such as an f1.2 or 1.4. But reasonable results can be gotten using slower one's of 2.8. However, this gives a circular image in the center of the frame, which can later be cropped"*

This applies to tubes, as well as the expansion of bellows. In calculating the amount of extension added to get the reproduction ratio desired, the reproduction ratio will be equal to the ratio of the millimeter of the extension tube, to the lens focal length, with lens focused at infinity:

*Reproduction Ratio = mm of extension over focal length of lens*

As example, adding extension tubes to a 100mm standard lens:

1:2 (Half life size) = 50mm extension
100mm lens

1:1 (Life Size) = 100mm extension
100mm lens

Remember you will need to make calculations for the amount of light loss if using manual cameras which do not offer TTL (through the lens metering) with flash units. As a rule, amount of light loss varies by length of lens used. The chart below gives an approx. amount of light loss using 25mm of extension on various sized lenses:

*28mm lens you lose approximately 2 stops.*
*50 macro you lose approximately 1 stop.*
*100mm lens you lose approximately 2/3 stop.*
*200mm lens you lose approximately 1/3 stop .*

As mentioned before, close up filters or diopters are an excellent choice to add to your kit. They're available in a wide variety of magnifications and quality. If you are just starting, you might prefer an inexpensive set of three or four bundled together, but remember a higher price gives better color rendition, sharper edges and less fringing. Use a larger size filter size than the lens needs and add a step down ring between. Since the center is the best part of the glass, you'll have better results!

*Ladybird*

Canon makes their 500D closeup lens which they suggest for lenses of 100mm or more and 250D for those below 100mm. The D series is double element and non-D's are single elements and therefore less expensive. They are made for various thread sizes, which allows use on most lenses you might have. The additional step down rings cost less than ten dollars each and can add even more versatility to your kit if several sizes are needed. Be sure and check available sizes to determine the ones you will need.

The use of teleconverters, which are among my favorites in combination with macro lenses, has advantages because there is no change in closest focusing distance and degradation of quality is minimal. Standard teleconverters also offer the advantage of working with other lenses you own and increase usability not only for your macro work, but telephoto shots too, since they do not restrict focusing at infinity. I'd suggest going with the best possible quality, since the added glass will cause some loss of detail. Check with the makers to be sure it works with the lenses you own before purchase and be aware that it may not allow auto focus when used on a macro or other lenses. This is one area you will not want to skimp on price.

*Canon life-size converter*

Note that several of these can be combined, such as a teleconverter and close up lens giving you a lot of flexibility to your macro system. Over time, you can make small additions to make shooting in a wide variety of situations easier.

*Robber Fly*

My final word of advice is that the most important thing is to have patience. You'll learn that rushing things doesn't pay off. You will also need to judgment on the right instant to press the shutter for the best photo. In macro photography, you often need to guess the subject's movements a fraction before it happens. Regardless of where you live, or your limitations in travelling, or the amount of time you can devote to shooting, macro photography is an *all weather sport*. And the best part, you learn about an often overlooked area of nature. *It is just plain fun.*

*Step up/down rings*

*"Close up filters or diopters are an excellent choice to add to your kit. They're available in a wide variety of magnification, and quality. If you are just starting, you might prefer an inexpensive set of three or four bundled together, but remember higher price gives better color rendition, sharper edges and less fringing. Use a larger size filter size than the lens needs and add a step down ring between. Since the center is the best part of the glass, you'll have better results!"*

*A2 with reversed 50mm*

*Wasp face*

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

# PARTING SHOTS

So you finished reading PBase Magazine, loved it so much that you were about to e-mail a copy off to all of your friends and are now wondering why in the world are you reading what the guy on the back page has to say!? So we decided that instead of having me blab for a while, we should hear from you. Below are a few of the letters our readers have sent over the past few months…

*"Just wanted to let you know how much I'm enjoying the magazine! You all are doing a great job. I would very much be interested in a print subscription if you end up pursuing it. The magazine so far has a very 'fresh' feeling to it. I've cancelled a few of my photo magazine subscriptions because they get so monotonous that you can read them in one sitting. Plus, you probably have a unique position that would allow the magazine to do some great things. If you keep paid staff to a minimum, charge a modest subscription rate and have a few good advertisers, the magazine could be used for raising funds for a few good charities, which would probably further increase interest in the magazine. Anyway, just an idea. Thanks for all the great work!" - Jason Ensminger*

*"I am a PBase member, have been for maybe two years, more of a silent member until recently. I frequently browse other galleries from pictures of birthday parties to great landscapes, all moving images. In doing so it has inspired me to go out more with my camera. I love photography, the ability to capture an emotion, a feeling, a thought, so amazing....I apologize if none of what I just said made sense but all I really wanted to say is: Thank You for creating a place where I can get away, a world that I can submerge myself and emerge feel free and boundless. From one members page to another, evidence that an imagination without creative limits, is necessary. Thank You! The Pbase Magazine is a great help and Looks great! Keep up the outstanding work." - Cindy Seenath*

"*My highest complements to you guys. You've created a very interesting, professional and upbeat magazine. Its things like this that make me realize the power of the internet. The internet, often accused of making people reclusive, can actually do wonders for bringing people together. Being that your magazine is distributed as a PDF, it's a lot like podcasting. I like to download them to my laptop and read them on the plane. Have you considered a landscape format? Seeing as most monitors are landscape, it seems natural to me to orient the magazine that way. I doubt most people print your magazine." - Duane Bolland*

*"Let me introduce myself. I am a man that likes photography and has an interest to Imaging and life at Jakarta, Indonesia. I would like to say thanks for all of you have done with this magazine. I have collected all of the editions since a few months ago and it is very appreciated. I often browse the pbase site for seeing and knowing much about photography and the people behind it. I am really proud with all the people in PBase Magazine who share his/her knowledge with us in free. Not many people can do that. So sorry for my English...". - Rinalvi*

From now on, we would like to start a "**Letter to the Editor**" page. Below are the following guidelines:

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:**

1. Submissions are due 15 days before the issue is published. Submissions can be sent by e-mail to magazine@pbase.com. The editors reserve the right to refuse any late submissions.

2. Letters should be no longer than 650 words.

3. Letters submitted anonymously will not be printed.

4. PBase Magazine reserves the right not to publish any letter it deems inappropriate for publication.

Can't wait to hear from you!

Cheers,
Eric Kuhn
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